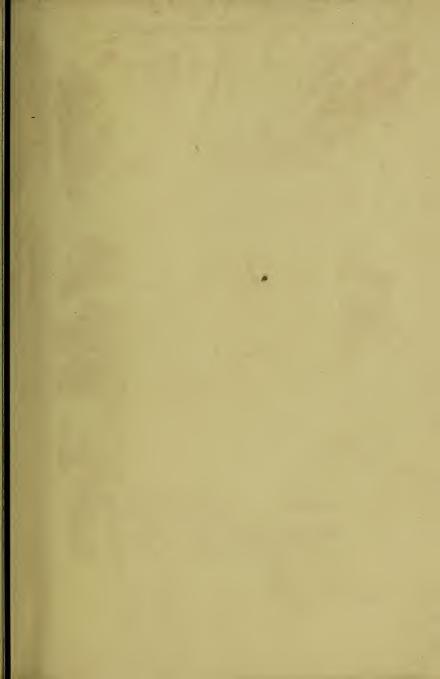




Class DA SZO

Book B221 J 6



4-

.

.

.





BANBURY CROSS

HISTORY OF BANBURY

And Its Neighbourhood.

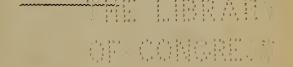
BY

WILLIAM PONSONBY JOHNSON,

AUTHOR OF TANTALLON, DUDLEY CASTLE, &C.

"So thou, fair borough! disarrayed Of battled wall and rampart's aid, As stately seem'st, but lovelier far Than in that panoply of war."

MARMION.



BANBURY:

G. WALFORD, "ADVERTISER" AND "BEACON" OFFICES, 72, HIGH STREET.

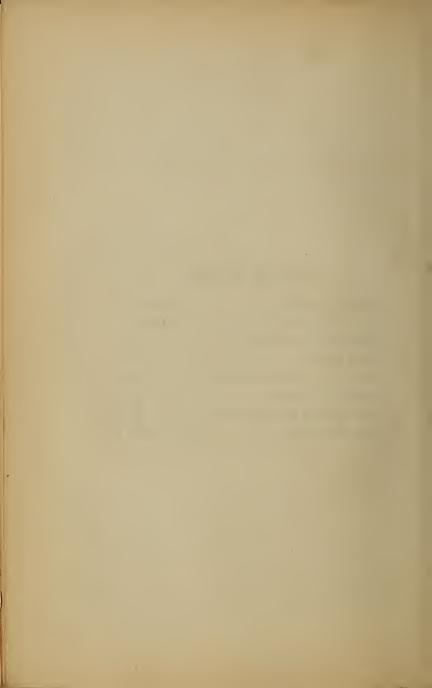


10114

MARALL BHY
MARANAON RO

INDEX OF PLATES.

2	BANBURY CROSS Frontisp	piece.
4	THE OLD CHURCH Page	17.
9	BROUGHTON CASTLE "	35.
•	HIGH STREET "	112.
•	THE ROUND HOUSE, EDGE HILL,	138.
•	BODICOTE HOUSE,	183.
8	THE CHURCH AND VICARAGE,	228.
8	THE TOWN HALL,	253.



THE

HISTORY OF BANBURY.

CHAPTER I.

From Barly Times to the Conquest.

Imperfect Materials.—The Ancient Britons.—The Druids and their Remains.—The Roman Invasion.—Alliance with the Dobuni.—The Amphitheatre in the Bear Garden.—Departure of the Romans.—Arrival of the Saxons.—The Heptarchy.—The Danes.—The Norman Conquest.

be imperfect, if the narrator should fail to begin at the beginning. This mode of commencement is undoubtedly desirable; but there is a difficulty in the way of its satisfactory accomplishment. The annals of early ages are meagre, confused, and contradictory; for the doggrel of bards and the songs of senachies were but sorry substitutes for written documents. If the historian of the rise and progress of nations has reason to find fault with the scanty nature of the materials placed at his command, with how much greater justice may the same complaint be preferred by him whose literary labours are confined to detailing the annals of a district. But as no amount of murmuring will mend the matter, we must even proceed to make the most of those materials which the assiduity of others has transmitted to our hands—embodying at the

same time sundry topics, which may or may not be deemed interesting and important; but which, notwithstanding the researches of our modern writers, have somehow or other escaped their notice.

The Dobuni, a tribe of the ancient Britons, are supposed to have been the earliest inhabitants of this part of the country, and to have occupied the district now known as the counties of Oxford and Gloucester. They were often at feud with the Coritani, another powerful race who inhabited the territory on their north-eastern boundary; and in common with every other branch of the great Celtic family, they set little value upon life, but had a keen regard for their honour. Rather than become the slaves or prey of a victor tribe, such was their love of liberty and independence, that they have even been known to immolate their wives, their children, and themselves.

The chief town of the Dobuni was situated where Cirencester now stands, and those of the Coritani occupied the present sites of Lincoln and Leicester. But even the capitals of both the tribes were mere assemblages of huts huddled together in confusion—built of wicker-work and clay, or else of earth and the trunks of trees, and covered with turf or the skins of wild beasts. The towns were generally surrounded by a ditch, and for greater security, were usually located either in a morass or the middle of a wood; so that in the former case, the advance of an invader might be impeded, and in the latter, that the inhabitants might be aided in their purposes of defence. Still these habitations were superior to those of the generality of barbaric nations, although far from being of such a construction as to satisfy the simplest requirements of modern

times. We know that the ancient Britons to a certain extent understood the arts of working metal, of moulding clay into articles of pottery, of shaping timber, of manufacturing cloth, and of making up that cloth into garments; although it does not appear that they applied the knowledge they possessed, to any great extent, in the practical purpose of increasing the comforts of domestic life, or in adding to the number of home enjoyments.

The religion which they professed was that of the Druids, who are generally believed to have accompanied the natives in their migrations from Gaul, and who exercised a great amount of influence over the minds of the common people, from the fact of their explaining the symbols of their mysterious creed to none but those who were to be initiated into all their rites. Like the idolaters of old, they worshipped in groves; and the remains of their temples are to be found, even at this distant day, relieving the monotony of the dreary plain, or standing in the naked majesty of massive rocks upon some of "the high places" in the land.

At Rollright, twelve miles from Banbury, on the borders of the two counties where the territories of the Dobuni and Cornavi joined, there may be seen one of the most perfect remains of a Druids' temple that is anywhere to be met with in the midland counties. The upright stones of which it is composed form nearly a perfect circle, the diameter being 104 feet from east to west, and 108 from north to south. At a distance of eighty-four yards to the north-east of the circle, there stands a rock upwards of eight feet above the ground, and a little more than five feet broad, which, in consequence

of its massive proportions, the country people in the neighbourhood call the "king stone." On the east are to be seen five upright pillars, some of which are nearly eleven feet high; but the stone table generally found on the top of such erections, if ever such was there, has either fallen down or been broken and removed.

From the position of these stones, in leaning inwards as if they were laying their heads together, they have received the name of "the whispering knights." Many lovers of the wild and wonderful would have us to believe that these "cromlechs" were used as sacrificial altars, and indeed, this was the opinion once generally held; but subsequent researches have brought to light the purpose for which they they were really intended. The fact of the cap-stone—in nearly every instance where such a covering remains—being found with the flat side downwards, shows that it must have been ill adapted for the reception of sacrificial victims, and archæologists are now nearly all agreed that these places were used as sepulchres by the early Britons. They are to be found in many places not only in Great Britain and Ireland, but also in the Channel Islands and throughout the northern continent of Europe. Their most common form consisted of three massive uprights, with the fourth side open, and roofed in by a large slab; but they differ both in shape and in the number of the stones of which they consist. Lukis, who has personally explored upwards of twenty of these chambers of the dead, gives an interesting detail of a large one which he examined in the Isle of Guernsey. On removing the various superincumbent strata, he found bones not only of men but of animals also, stones and troughs for grinding

corn, and several jars of sun-baked earthenware, that were somewhat like those alluded to in *Robinson Crusoe*. From the position of the cromlech at Rollright, what is more probable than that some mighty chief had chosen his last resting-place nigh the temple of his faith? What more likely than that his faithful followers should have raised over his remains a structure which should thus have endured for ages after his very name was forgotten?

Here then was one of these roofless temples where, in remote ages, the votaries of a now forgotten superstition assembled for the performance of those mysterious rites with which we are but imperfectly acquainted. We know that they believed in sorcery and divination, and we have heard that they occasionally, though it may have been rarely, offered up human victims in sacrifice. Those who have most deeply studied their character and manners are of opinion that the victims thus immolated were criminals, who by the transgression of the precepts which must ever regulate society had forfeited their lives to their country's laws. This is highly probable, as the Druids were not only the priests, but also the law-givers and judges of the people—the arbiters in disputes and the referees by whom all quarrels were decided.

In the neighbourhood of Banbury, there are many other remains belonging to the time of the ancient Britons. There is a camp at Tadmarton, five miles from Banbury, the diameter of which is about two hundred yards. There is that on the castle hill at Brailes, between eight or nine miles from Banbury, and another at Gredenton, an eminence connected with the range at Dassett. In the parish of Swalcliffe, there is a

camp at Madmarston, which contains an area of about five acres. We find another at Nadbury, in Ratley parish, which commands an extensive prospect across the vale of Avon. There are the remains of a camp at Ilbury, about six miles south-west from Banbury, and two in Northamptonshire—one of which is on Harbury hill, and the other on a rising ground at Rainsborough. The sites of nearly all of these may be seen from Crouch Hill—that commanding little eminence a short way westward from the town—which, as much of it consists of what is called "made earth," was probably made use of as a signal station.

These remains indicate the state of things existing in the district, when the Romans under Julius Caesar invaded England, fifty years before the birth of Christ, and after a brief and bloody struggle succeeded in establishing a shortlived government. The Dobuni were at that time suffering from the incursions of some of their predatory neighbours, and welcomed the Roman army as friends and deliverers. the demon of domestic discord recalled her legions for the defence of Rome, their departure was witnessed by this portion of the natives with regret; and when another army was sent over into Britain, during the reign of the emperor Claudius, in the year 43, they were again received by the Dobuni as welcome allies. This expedition was under the command of Plautius, and was more successful than the former in subjugating a considerable portion of the island. The territory of the Dobuni thus came to be incorporated with the first Roman province that was established in the island of Great Britain.

In consequence of the friendship existing between the army

of Italy and the original inhabitants of the district under notice, there are not so many traces left in the immediate neighbourhood to mark the presence of the Roman cohorts, as are still to be found in the northern parts of the kingdom where their safety was imperilled by surrounding foes. earthen mounds are here to be met with, proclaiming the sites of their mouldering fortifications, and no turret-studded rampart runs from sea to sea; yet abundant evidence is handed down to us that whether Banbury was or was not the Branavis of the Romans, it was no unimportant station of that army by whose peerless prowess the Roman eagles were borne from victory to victory—from the wilds of Caledonia to the walls of Jerusalem. The number of the Roman coins and other antiquities which have been dug up from time to time, the discovery of the altar-stone which gave its name to an inn now displaced by the Baptist chapel, the tesselated pavements of Roman villas which have occasionally been brought to light by those engaged in the operations of agriculture, the numerous funeral urns that have been found throughout the whole extent of the surrounding district and which must have marked the sites of Roman sepulchres, all bear unerring testimony to the fact that the Roman nation and the Roman name must have had many a representative in this locality.

Then there is the amphitheatre in the Bear Garden, where the gladiatorial encounters were wont to take place; and where those feats of agility, strength, and skill, which rendered the Roman soldier so terrible in the hand-to-hand conflicts which then decided battles, were exhibited in the presence of applauding spectators. The arena is 135 feet in breadth, and in the form of a semicircle cut out in the face of a rising ground fronting the north. There are three terraces on the slope which are respectively twenty-five, forty, and sixty feet from the arena, thus affording accommodation to about two thousand lookers-on. Go, view that grassy recess at the southwest corner of the town, and call to mind the ages that have passed away since the warriors of old contended there for the mastery! Survey that spot with hallowed care! People it again, as it was wont to be of yore, with the chosen chivalry of Rome! and it will at once appear that Banbury must have been an important station even then, as it was only at such that these extensive amphitheatres were formed.

But the era arrived at length, when dissensions within the state, and assaults by the Goths and Huns from without, hastened the downfal of that mighty empire which had taken centuries to construct, and which was built up of so many nations. Foreign wars had drained Rome of her most daring sons, and the enervating influence of luxurious indulgence had enfeebled the others who remained at home. The love of conquest lured her warriors on, until the northern barbarians were thundering at her gates, and the absent legions were recalled in all haste for the defence of the capital, leaving the extremities of the kingdom to shift for themselves. In the year 448, the Romans bade a last adieu to Great Britain, after having held undisputed sovereignty over the fairest and most fertile portion of the island for a period approaching to four hundred years.

No sooner had the cohorts withdrawn from the southern shores of the kingdom, than an irruption of Picts and Scots swept over the now defenceless territory. Twice did the Romans send a legion over from Gaul to the assistance of their friends; but on the third application, they had none to spare. In this dilemma, it was agreed to invite the Saxons to their aid; and in 449, or 450, the brothers Hengist and Horsa landed in the Isle of Thanet with 1600 men. The cure was found, however, to be worse than the disease—for they who thus came as allies to befriend, soon afterwards began to subdue as conquerors. Fresh armies arrived under different leaders, and laid the foundation of "the seven kingdoms."

It is only with that of Mercia that we have now to deal; and this, the largest of the states in the Heptarchy, was neither founded nor sustained without a considerable effusion of blood. Such of the ancient Britons as would not yield obedience to the Saxon were driven westward with tremendous slaughter. Although beaten at every point by their more martial antagonists, they still gallantly contested each inch of ground; and on their retreat into Oxfordshire from the counties of Northampton and Bucks, the Cherwell offered a favourable position of defence. The baffled Britons were again driven back, but not till the water run crimson to the Isis, when some hundreds of the boldest threw themselves into the Roman fort at Banbury with the stern resolve to sell their lives as dearly as possible. How long they withstood the fierce onslaught of the Saxon, how they fought and how they fell, the histories of the time fail to inform us; but the contest appears to have been obstinate and severe. After the Britons had been driven into the mountain fastnesses of Wales, the district was still far from being in a

peaceful state; for from the commencement of the seventh century to the early part of the ninth, it was the scene of many a struggle between the kings of Mercia and West Saxony, until the year 827, when Egbert, the sovereign of the latter state, succeeded in uniting the scattered kingdoms of England into one.

A new enemy now appeared in the persons of the Danes, who from this time managed to keep the Saxons in perpetual hot water; until Canute succeeded in vanquishing them at last, and a Danish king reigned over England. But before the prince of Denmark's arms were finally victorious, many a deadly struggle took place between his followers and those of the then possessors of the soil. One of these was fought at Danesmoor near Edgcott, a second in the neighbourhood of Hook Norton, a third at Tadmarton, where a terrible conflict is reported to have taken place, and several others of lesser consequence in different parts of the district. From the years 1017 to 1041, Canute and his two sons occupied the throne in succession; after which the Saxon line of monarchs was restored in the person of Edward the Confessor. Brief, however, was the period of this restoration; for on the 14th of October, 1066, the Saxons met with a tremendous overthrow upon the field of Hastings, and William Duke of Normandy became England's King.

CHAPTER II.

From the Conquest to Plantagenet.

Situation of the Town.—Origin of its Name.—Norman Appropriations.—Deddington Castle. Calthorpe Manor, and others.—Saxon Disaffection—Removal of the Bishopric to Lincoln—Kings and Bishops.—Foundation of the Castle.—Erection of the Church.—The King and Bishops disagree.—Civil War.

ing the suburb known as Grimsbury in the adjoining county of Northampton. It is built on the western bank of the Cherwell—a rivulet which has its source at Charwelton, near Daventry, in the last named county, joins North Oxfordshire near the village of Claydon, flows past Cropredy, intersects the parliamentary borough of Banbury, skirts the parishes of East Adderbury and Deddington, and finally mingles with the Isis at Oxford.

With regard to the origin of the name of Banbury, antiquarians entertain great differences of opinion. In order to parade their logic and their lore, they advance the most improbable and absurd theories, which they maintain with as much earnestness, volubility, and zeal, as if something really important depended thereon. But as none of these gentlemen were present at the christening, we shall content ourselves with adopting the theory that appears most reasonable. The Saxons called it *Banesbyrig*, and what does that mean? The word *Bane* is genuine Saxon, signifying ruin, loss, slaughter, or

destruction; whilst byrig simply means a town or place of refuge and defence. When the ancient Britons retired westward before the Saxon invaders, as narrated in the previous chapter, they manfully defended the banks of the Cherwell; and when driven from these, they threw themselves into the old Roman fort, which in all probability occupied the site of the future castle. In storming a strong position like this, the Saxons must have sustained a heavy loss, and spoke of the place as "Slaughter-Town" ever afterwards.

The Normans were now, however, lords of the ascendant; and in Doomsday Book the name is recorded as Banesberie. Most of the property in Banbury at that time belonged to the bishop of Dorchester as superior lord, and the Conqueror did not dare to alienate the property of the church; but that which had previously been in the possession of such Saxon nobles as had followed their monarch to the field of Hastings -or which appertained to those who subsequently opposed the Conqueror's progress-was ruthlessly confiscated, and bestowed by the king upon his Norman adherents. manor of Deddington, along with many others, was given to his half-brother Odo, earl of Kent and bishop of Bayeux, who either built the castle there, or added greatly to the strength of its fortifications. The manor of Calthorpe, in the immediate vicinity of Banbury, was bestowed on a Captain Danvers, one of the followers of the Norman baron D'Oyley. The earl of Mercia—the Saxon proprietor of Adderbury and Bloxham at first aided the Conqueror in his work of subjugation; but in consequence of some real or fancied insult, he withdrew from the Norman cause, and joined the men of the north, who yet remained in the field in arms against the invader. On this account, his estates were confiscated, and the property referred to passed at once into the monarch's immediate possession. The baron D'Oyley, founder of the castle at Oxford, was presented with the manors of Tadmarton, Hook Norton, and about forty others; whilst that of Broughton was conferred upon Berenger of Todenham. These and other alienations of property led to much turmoil and contention; for the repression of which and for the purpose of overawing the refractory, the most severe and arbitrary measures were adopted; but generations went down to the last resting-place of man, before the subjugated Saxons submitted in peace to the stringent exactions of their feudal lords.

The bishop of Dorchester, lord paramount of Banbury, died a year or two after the conquest, and was succeeded by the Norman Remigius de Feschamp. The death of the former prelate in all likelihood saved him from the deposition which awaited nearly the whole of his Saxon brethren, whose sympathies were doubtless on the side of their countrymen; for with the exception of Wulstan, bishop of Worcester, the whole of them were degraded from the episcopal office. It was the policy of all the sovereigns of the Norman line—the more effectually to check what was called "the turbulent spirit of the people"—to take care that no Saxon-born subject should, under any pretence, be raised to offices of trust, emolument, or power.

A synod was held in London shortly subsequent to the period of which we now treat, for the purpose of settling the precedence of the episcopal sees, and for removing the seat of some of them from insignificant villages to considerable towns. In accordance with the decision of this clerical assembly, Lincoln became the seat of the diocese, instead of the old-fashioned little town on the bank of the Thames, and bishop Remigius laid the foundation of Lincoln cathedral.

Whilst the king was conducting a campaign in France, he was so severely injured by the sudden shying of the steed he bestrode, as to cause his being consigned to that couch from which he never rose. His half-brother Odo, the earl and bishop, had been imprisoned in Normandy on a charge of having intrigued for the attainment of the papal throne; but he was released from custody by the dying monarch, who left his Norman dukedom to his eldest son, whilst to his second he bequeathed the crown of England.

William Rufus accordingly ascended the throne in 1087; and in 1092, Remigius bishop of Lincoln slept with his fathers. It was the practice of the reigning sovereign, when a bishopric became vacant, to allow it to remain so for a series of years, during which period the revenues of the see were quietly appropriated to the royal exchequer; but in this instance, the fortunate successor does not appear to have been kept waiting so long "for dead men's shoes," as he received his ring and crozier, the symbols of his investment, in the early part of the following year. It must, however, be borne in mind, that he was already chancellor to the king; so it is by no means improbable, that there was a perfect understanding between them, and that for his ready compliance with regard to the appointment, some portion at least of the bishop's revenues found its way into the monarch's coffers. It was

thus that Robert Bloet was raised to the dignity of bishop of Lincoln; and among his first acts was to give away what was not precisely his own—for he granted the tithes of the rectories of Banbury and Cropredy to enrich the wealthy abbey of Ensham.

Nearly every body knows that in the year 1100, the redheaded king was killed in the New Forest by an arrow; and that, although his elder brother Robert duke of Normandy was alive, Henry, the third son of the Conqueror, contrived by a hasty gallop from the forest glades to secure at once the royal treasure and the throne. He confirmed by charter the previous grant of tithes to the abbey, and thus the well-endowed rectory of Banoury sunk into an indifferently-remunerated vicarage. In 1123, the bishop was on a visit to his Majesty at Woodstock, and whilst enjoying the pleasures of the chase, he was thrown from his horse and so severely injured as to survive the accident a very few days.

Alexander de Blois was the next bishop of Lincoln and contributed largely to the prosperity of Banbury. The elevation of his uncle to the see of Sarum, some sixteen years prior to this, had involved the king in a quarrel with pope Paschal II. which had led to the temporary withdrawal of primate Anselm from the kingdom. The rupture had at length been put an end to by the interference of mutual friends as well as by the soothing influence of mutual concessions; and there is every reason to believe, it was through this uncle's influence that Alexander was elevated to the see of Lincoln. The new bishop appears to have been a little man, exceedingly fond of ostentation and display,—one who devoted a great portion of

the revenue of his diocese to the erection of castles and to building churches, as if he were determined to leave enduring memorials behind him which would hand down his name to a remote posterity.

Two years after his consecration at Canterbury, which took place in 1123, the bishop laid the foundation of Banbury castle —an edifice which must of necessity have added largely to the ancient importance of the good old town. Exclusive of the outworks and exterior defences, which were probably added at a more recent date, it occupied nearly an acre of ground, and stood on the spot, to the north of the Market-Place, now known as the "Castle Gardens." It was defended by a battlemented wall, constructed of stone, surmounted by towers of a like description, and surrounded by a moat, over which a drawbridge conducted the visitor to the iron-studded gate. It was divided into two courts by a wall of a similar character with the former, but running due east and west, and having a strongly-defended gateway in the centre. In the innermost or northern court, the episcopal mansion reared its castellated walls, and was no doubt replete with such luxuries as could be furnished by the capabilities of a semi-barbarous age. The bishop's domestics and all the high officials of his retinue were accommodated with lodgings in the principal mansion, whilst the retainers and men-at-arms were quartered in the towers over the gateways, or in the turrets at the angles of the walls. This then was Banbury castle—the portals of which, as we shall have occasion to shew in the course of the present narrative, were ever ready to receive a friend, or frown a stern defiance on a foe.





But there was one building in connection with the castle which must neither be overlooked nor forgotten. It was a large square stone keep, placed nearly in the centre of the outer yard, and was used as a prison for special delinquents. In the ages of which we treat, there were few except those connected with the church who could either read or write; and so highly were these acquirements then held in estimation, that if a culprit possessed of clerkly skill had been convicted of any crime save two, by the justiciaries or ordinary tribunal, he still had the power of appealing to the clergy, and of demanding a fresh trial "by his peers." It was for that class of criminals that this prison was erected; and either from the fact that "a fellow feeling makes us wondrous kind," or that they had previously been convicted on insufficient testimony, certain it is that the judgment of "the court below" was repeatedly reversed. As education progressed, it was found necessary to abrogate the privilege, and hence arose the expression of condemning an accused person "without benefit of clergy."

The magnificent old church at Banbury, which was removed in 1790 to make room for the present commodious but unsightly edifice, was commenced if not entirely built by the same prelate. It was a cathedral-looking structure in the Gothic style, sixty-four yards in length on the inside, by twenty seven in breadth, with a cross aisle measuring thirty-four yards in length. At the spot where this aisle intersected the nave, there was a lofty square tower, surmounted by eight carved and fretted pinnacles. In this was suspended a peal of six bells, whose silvery sounds were wont to sweep over hill

and dale—summoning the worshippers to the house of prayer—itself the noblest feature in the landscape.

King Henry was fonder of lampreys than was good for his health, and having indulged to excess in his favourite dish, the consequences brought him to an untimely end. He died in Normandy in 1135, after having bequeathed his kingdom to his daughter Matilda, and taken, as he thought, every necessary precaution to secure her succession to the throne. But the breath had scarce taken its departure from the royal clay, ere his nephew Stephen—his sister's son—hurried over to England as fast as sails and oars could impel him, and hesitated not in his rapid route until he found himself within the walls of London. His brother the bishop of Winchester gained the prelate of Sarum over to support the usurper's cause, and the two prevailed upon the archbishop of Canterbury to officiate at the coronation. In return for these good offices, the king appointed the bishop of Lincoln lord high treasurer of the kingdom; but in 1138, when a rebellion was raised in Matilda's favour, he appears to have suspected the fidelity of both uncle and nephew. The bishop of Sarum, like his relative of Lincoln, had a wonderful penchant for building castles—as he had constructed one at Sherborne, a second at Devizes, and a third was in course of erection at Malmesbury. The king was at Oxford after the battle of the Standard, and taking advantage of a fray between the retainers of the earl of Brittany and those of the bishop of Sarum, which occurred within the precincts of the court, he threw both Alexander and his uncle into prison, and commanded them under threats of instant punishment to deliver up their fortresses into his hand. After an imprisonment of several months' duration they complied with the unseemly demand; but the bishop of Winchester, the king's brother, having now been appointed the pope's legate, summoned his sovereign to a synod at Westminster, at which Aubrey de Vere appeared for the king and charged the two bishops with being guilty of high treason. The court, however, refused to entertain the charge until the castles should have been restored to their owners; and civil war being imminent at the moment, the king thought it the most prudent course to comply with the demand—so the prelates in question got back their possessions. From that period to the date of his death, our bishop meddled no more in political affairs, so that Banbury was spared from many of the horrors resulting from a barbarous internecine war.

Whilst on a visit to pope Eugene III. whom he met in France in 1147, Alexander was seized by a malady which terminated in death; but before his dissolution, he managed, although not without difficulty, to return to Banbury, and his remains were interred in the church which he had founded. This event took place in 1148, and Robert Chesney was the next bishop. The record is extant in which Eugene confirmed to this prelate the possessions of his see, and among these special mention is made of the castle, market, and liberties of Banbury.

During the period of which we treat, the whole country was convulsed with the atrocities of war. King Stephen is at one moment on the pinnacle of pride—at the next, he is a closely-confined captive at Gloucester—anon, we find him at the head of a triumphant army, wading back through fields of

carnage to his throne. To-day, Matilda is enthusiastically acknowledged as England's queen—to-morrow, she is an exile and a lonely wanderer. But a compromise was happily come to at length, between the usurper and Matilda's son, by which it was agreed that the former should reign unmolested during life, and should be succeeded by Henry the lawful heir. In 1134, Stephen was summoned to a higher bar, and without opposition, the second Henry ascended the throne.

CHAPTER III.

From Henry KK, to Edward KKK.

The State of the People — Fairs and Markets. — The Sword and the Crozier. — The Battle of Alnwick. — Coeur de Lion. — The Hospitium of St. John and Hospital of St. Leonard. — The Barons at Brackley. — The Priory of Wroxton. — The Banbury Bailiff. — More Taxes. — The Holy Wells. — Broughton Castle. — Sir Piers Gaveston at Deddington. — The Knight of Wickham. — Provisions regulated by Act of Parliament.

HE house of Plantagenet having succeeded thus quietly to the supreme power in England, it may not be deemed a digression if we enquire for a moment into the actual state and condition of the great bulk of the people, during the reigns of the Norman kings. Except in the instance of the former conquest of the greater portion of the island by the Saxons, it would be difficult to find a parallel case, or one in which the native inhabitants were so completely subdued, and their possessions so thoroughly alienated to the victors.

Contumely and insult were added to plunder, cruelty, and wrong; until the subjugated Saxons were but too happy, if by the performance of the most menial services, they could only gain the favour of their feudal oppressors. Many of the nobility—who, by the bye, had been just as despotic towards the serfs under their rule as the Norman conquerors were with them—fled to other lands, to escape the penalties they were exposed to in their own.

This was decidedly "the age of Castle Building;" and many of those grim old fortresses, whose crumbling ruins frown over the landscape, with many others whose sites are known only to the archæologist and antiquarian, owe their origin to the era we have endeavoured to describe, reared as they were by the horny hands of Saxon bondsmen, cemented with their blood, and watered by their tears. In addition to those already enumerated, may be mentioned the castles of Chipping Norton, Chipping Warden, Culworth, Brackley, King's Sutton, and many others in the district to which allusion might be made. These, in many instances, were mere dens of robbers; who carried on a system of wholesale plunder, and whose only virtue was that of regularity—but it was a regularity in levying forced contributions. So that when we talk of the "good old times," it would perhaps be as well to recollect that these "good old times" had some disagreeable concomitants, and that every era brings its own troubles.

In 1157, Henry granted a charter to bishop Chesney empowering him to hold in Banbury an annual fair which was to continue throughout the whole of the Whitsun-week; and all persons were forbidden, under the penalty of £10, from dis-

turbing those who were trading thereat, either on their journey to the town, or on their return to their respective dwellings. The same monarch, three years subsequent to this, renewed a previous charter, granting to the bishop the right of free warrenry in his Banbury estate, and forbidding every other person to poach in his preserves, under a penalty of £10; which, as it was equal to £100 of our money, must have been looked upon as a most stringent game law.

It is highly probable that a weekly market had been established in the town considerably antecedent to this period; but we find it now first officially alluded to in a royal proclamation, in which Henry apprises the justices that he has given permission to the bishop of Lincoln to hold a market "in his town of Banbury," after the custom of other market towns. Thus the rising prosperity of the locality whose chronicles of the past we are now endeavouring to record, in all probability gave a check to the importance of King's Sutton, where the weekly market for the district had been hitherto held.

The spiritual and temporal powers of the kingdom were now sadly at variance—the "Constitution of Clarendon," whereby clerical offenders were subjected to magisterial jurisdiction, forming the present subject of dispute. Thomas a Becket, backed by the whole strength of a powerful and united hierarchy, had succeeded in establishing a clerical kingdom in the state, wholly irrespective of the temporal power, and with this imperium in imperio, Henry found it both difficult and dangerous to contend. His ministers had been excommunicated by name, and the thunders of the church's censure were about to be discharged upon his own head. In this

critical juncture, the bishop of Lincoln was gathered to his fathers, and the king, not knowing whom he could trust bestowed the bishopric upon Geoffrey, his own illegitimate son by "fair Rosamond" the lord Clifford's daughter. This youthful prelate was bishop of Lincoln, and consequently lord paramount of Banbury, from 1167 to 1183, when he was translated to the archbishopric of York. Like many other ecclesiastical dignitaries of the time, his hand grasped the sword as readily as the crozier, and the helmet graced his brow as frequently as the mitre. In 1174, when many of the nobles were in open rebellion, William king of Scotland, taking advantage of the turmoil, invaded England at the head of 80,000 men. The warlike prelate summoned his vassals to the field, and by forced marches hurried down to the north, to effect a junction with the justiciary Ralph de Glanville.

The king of Scots lay encamped at Alnwick, wholly unconscious of the vicinity of a foe, when on a misty morning in July, the bishop and De Glanville, after a night march of above thirty miles, burst like a thunder-cloud upon the Scotch camp. William hastily called together a half-accoutred handful of horse, and in order to give his men a few minutes to get under arms, made a spirited dash with this small force against those who had so unceremoniously disturbed his slumbers, and who were still engaged with the picquets at the outworks of the camp. But at the first shock, he was unhorsed and taken prisoner, and the scattered cavalry spread the panic through the half-awakened but terror-stricken array. This skirmish—for it was nothing more—furnishes us with the first instance in which the spearmen of Banbury came in

collision with the mailed tartans of the north; and if we may judge by the results of the action, or by the undoubted prowess of their clerical leader, their conduct must have been worthy of their birthplace, as the routed clansmen never rallied till they were north of the Tweed.

In 1183, Walter Constance succeeded Geoffrey in the Lincoln episcopate; and three years afterwards, Hugh of Grenoble was appointed to the once more vacant chair. This prelate appears to have been a most zealous worker, in more senses of the word than one; for when he set about restoring the cathedral at Lincoln, he is said to have personally assisted as a mason's labourer, and thus to have set an example of diligence to those employed in the work of renovation, by himself carrying the hod.

On the 6th of July, 1189, at Chinon in Normandy, Henry II. died from the effects of overwhelming sorrow, which had thrown him into a lingering fever. He was succeeded by his son Richard Coeur de Lion; who, in the month of June in the following year, took his departure for the crusades, in company with Philip of France and several other European potentates. On his return from the Holy Land, in the winter of 1192,3, Richard was ungenerously arrested by Leopold of Austria, loaded with chains, and consigned to a dungeon in the heart of Germany. He was ransomed by the payment of a sum equal to about £300,000, and his arrival in England, in March, 1194, was welcomed by his subjects with heartfelt enthusiasm. Tournaments were everywhere held in honour of the king's return, and one of these is recorded as having taken place on the banks of the Ouse near Brackley. 'The

spot where the tournament was held is a level piece of land in the parish of Evenley, and is still called Bayard's Green. It is not stated that Richard himself was at the "passage of arms" in question; but when the monarch's predilections are taken into consideration, it is by no means improbable that he was present and took part in the mimic fray.

At the siege of Chalos, in 1199, the lion-hearted king was wounded by an arrow, and a bungling surgeon caused the injury to prove mortal. He bequeathed the kingdom to his brother John, to the exclusion of his nephew, an elder brother's son; but these unimportant aberrations from the direct line of descent were by no means uncommon in the not very particular era of which we are treating.

It was now that the local hospitium of St. John was founded. It was erected on the south-eastern side of the south gate of Banbury, on the spot where the ivy-mantled convent stands. Indeed, there is good reason for believing that this building, which is now occupied by the Sisters of Mercy, at one time formed a portion of the structure in question, and was erected shortly prior to the period of the Reformation. The term "hospital" is apt to mislead. Buildings known by that name are generally devoted to the reception of patients suffering under certain forms of disease; but the hospitia of our forefathers had a much wider signification. They were frequently largely endowed, for the purpose of dispensing the hospitality of departed benevolence-"hospitality," a word which owes its origin to these very institutions. Here, it is true, when the poor required them, they were supplied not only with medicines, but with other necessaries of which, perhaps,

they stood even still more largely in need. Here the helpless, the aged, and the indigent were ever certain of meeting with succour. Here, too, the wants of the wayfarer were relieved, and his heart was gladdened to speed on his journey.

But they were not without their proper hospitals also. They had institutions which in this respect were similar to our own-specially adapted for the reception of patients suffering under those specific forms of disease to which from their habits they were chiefly exposed. That terrible scourge, the leprosy-sent by an indulgent Heaven to teach mankind the wholesome lesson that "Cleanliness is next to godliness" -oft laid the strong man low, and struck the mother down amid her weeping offspring. As the Hebrew lawgiver enacted of old, that "He that hath the plague of leprosy shall be defiled; he is unclean; he shall dwell alone; without the camp shall his habitation be." So, at Grimsbury, the hospital of St. Leonards was erected for the reception and proper treatment of this class of patients. The period when it was founded has not been ascertained; but the place where it stood is still denominated the 'Spital Farm.

In the year 1200, being the first of the reign of king John, the priory of Wroxton was founded by Michael Belet, who bestowed upon the institution his manors situated at Wroxton and Thorpe, and whatsoever was or ought to be his, both at these places and in the village of Balscot. About the same time, the priory of Chacombe was founded, by Hugh one of the royal justiciaries of Normandy, who afterwards withdrew from the world and ended his days within the retirement of its walls.

In the course of the same year, bishop Hugh of Lincoln departed this life, and the vacancy does not appear to have been filled up until the appointment of William de Blois, which seems to have taken place about 1203. At this period, the country around Crouch hill was covered with wood, and a charter was granted to the new bishop, authorising him to enclose this land; to cut, root out, or sell this timber, notwithstanding any objections that the foresters or verderers might raise.

In the meanwhile, by his cowardice and cruelty, king John had thoroughly alienated the affections of his people; whilst owing to his indolence, he had allowed nearly the whole of his Norman possessions to be wrested from his grasp by the French king. He quarrelled with the clergy to such a degree that when the bishopric of Lincoln became vacant in 1206, he knew not one upon whom he might safely confer the see. The kingdom was laid under an interdict by pope Innocent III. and the bishops of London, Ely, and Worcester were ordered by the court of Rome to excommunicate their kinga mandate which they obeyed in due form. Hugh of Wells, chancellor of the kingdom, was created bishop of Lincoln in 1209; and under pretence of receiving consecration at the hands of the archbishop of Rouen, the newly-chosen prelate proceeded to France and tendered his submission to the exiled archbishop of Canterbury. A wise or a firm prince might have successfully opposed the gigantic innovations now attempted to be forced upon the country-more particularly if he enjoyed the good-will of his subjects-but John was unfortunately neither the one nor the other; so that when danger

threatened, and a French army was collected, with Pandolf the pope's dread legate at their head, he purchased peace by the most abject submission.

At this period we find a family in the neighbourhood of Banbury rising to opulence and offices of command. To the baron of Broughton was confided the charge of the royal castle of Bridgnorth, and he was also made warden of the Welsh marches. When the nobles resolved that unalloyed despotism should triumph no longer, and that the kingly power in England should be restrained within due and proper bounds, the baron of Broughton stood aloof from the organisation and maintained the cause of the yacillating monarch. On the festival of Easter, in 1215, the dissatisfied aristocracy assembled in Stamford to the number of two thousand knights, who with their armed retainers made a gallant show. Elated with their numbers, confident in their unanimity, and conscious of the power they could call to their aid, they proceeded towards Oxford where the court then was. On the 27th of April they arrived at Brackley, where they were met by messengers from the king. A council was summoned, and the embassadors declared that his majesty only wanted to know what those liberties were which they desired him to grant, and if consistent with the office he held, he would not stand in the way of his people's rights. A schedule was drawn up containing a list of their demands, and the messengers were instructed to lay this before the king. But when the document in question was submitted to the monarch, he flew into a right royal rage, and enquired why they did not ask him to give up his kingdom also? He swore that he should never comply with their

requirements, as in such a case he could only be a slave or a puppet in their hands.

The nobles then unfurled the banner of rebellion, and the king also summoned his adherents to his side. The baron of Broughton was ordered to raise four hundred Welshmen, and to repair with them to Salisbury plain, but before the day appointed for the rendezvous, the faint hearted monarch had again given way; and on the 19th of June, the Great Charter, which has proved the foundation of liberty in England, was signed and sealed upon the plain of Runnymede.

When the more immediate danger was over, and the armed barons had dispersed to their dwellings, John showed how little reliance was to be placed upon his word, by venting the full measure of his wrath upon some of those who had forced on him the obnoxious task of conceding to his people a modicum of liberty. We accordingly find that the lord Clavering of Aynho was dispossessed of his lands, as was also the seignorial baron of Deddington. Whilst the king was passing from Lynn into Lincolnshire, in prosecution of his designs against the favourers of the charter, he lost his baggage and regalia in the sea-a misfortune which so aggravated a distemper under which he was labouring, as to cause his death at Newark, on the 17th of October, 1216. Before, however, he went the way which even kings must go, he heaped high honours on the lord of Broughton. That nobleman was chosen high sheriff of the county of Herts, and had conferred upon him the town and manorial rights of Alton in Hampshire, together with large tracts of land in the counties of Northampton, Leicester, and Gloucester.

On his father's death, although only nine years of age, Henry III. was raised to the throne, and the earl of Pembroke chosen Protector of the kingdom. During the whole of this long reign, few events are recorded which could greatly affect the district to which these annals refer. The power of De Broughton is now found upon the wane. The lands of Newington had just been added to his vast possessions; but when the papal bull declared the king of age, and the order followed for the nobles to render up to him all the royal forts, castles, and palaces, which during his minority had been entrusted to their care, we find that the earls of Chester and Albemarle refused to comply, and were backed by the lords De Lacy and De l' Isle as well as the stalwart baron of Broughton, who vowed that he would never give up the castles of Woodstock and Bridgnorth. The consequence was that he was proclaimed a rebel; but when the primate threatened the recusants with the thunders of the church, they deemed compliance to be the wisest course, and the strongholds in question were given up to the king.

We find king Henry twice renewing the charter by which the lands of Wroxton were vested in the priory, on condition that the canons therein "should serve the Lord for ever." Weekly markets were established and suppressed at Chipping Warden, King's Sutton, and Adderbury, with a proviso in each case that they should not injure the market at Banbury. We find the royal huntsmen and hounds lodged in state at Banbury castle, and the sheriff of the county enjoined to pay the two huntsmen twenty shillings apiece. We find mention first made of the prebend of Banbury in connection with Lincoln cathe-

dral, although probably established long before. But as none of these circumstances call for particular comment, suffice it merely to enumerate the successors to the episcopate of Lincoln and lordship of Banbury.

In 1235, Hugh de Wells was succeeded by big-headed Robert, who notwithstanding his unprepossessing name, was one of the most learned and pious churchmen of the age. His death occurred in 1253, when he was succeeded by Henry of Lexington, whose term of office was of brief duration, for in 1258, Richard of Gravesend was appointed to the vacant see.

After the longest reign of any of our English kings, the third Henry succumbed to the last enemy of man, and in 1272, his son Edward I. was proclaimed. He was at that time on his return from the crusades, and did not land in England until two years afterwards. The poverty of the crown induced him to institute commissions of enquiry into all encroachments on the royal domains, and into the probable value of all escheats, forfeitures, and wardships.

These commissioners give rather an unfavourable report as to the honesty of the bishop's constable in Banbury; who, according to their statement, took the penny from each village in the hundred, on the ground that strict justice should be done to the people; but he would give no account of the moiety of those pennies which should have been handed over to the royal treasurer. They report that a sheep-stealer named Gubbins was imprisoned in the castle, and although he was caught in the fact and the mutton found in his possession, the constable allowed him quietly to depart. The commissioners state that they did not know whether or not

the thief gave the constable a bribe to induce him to let him go; but they drily add, that the bishop's deputy retained property belonging to the prisoner, amounting to the value of 27s. 6d. which was then worth more than a dozen sheep.

They report also that a prisoner named William Basjate had been confined in the castle on a charge of robbery; but that he made his escape and sought sanctuary in the church. It was customary in those days that when a felon thus found refuge at the altar, if he should confess his crime and consent to exile himself to a foreign land for life, the coroner of the district was to give him a passport to the nearest seaport, and this safeguard all men were bound to respect. Basjate had complied with all these requirements; but whether our constable felt indignant with the culprit for breaking from his stronghold, or whether the latter had omitted to conciliate the official mind by an acceptable douceur, certain it is that the offender was waylaid on his journey to the coast, and left a headless trunk by the road-side. For all these multiplied transgressions, the constable was let off for £20.

The king obtained from parliament the grant of a fifteenth of all the moveable property in the kingdom—rather a heavy income-tax; from the merchants, an export duty of half-a-mark on every sack of wool sent out of the kingdom; and from the pope, one tenth of the whole ecclesiastical revenues, for the space of the three next ensuing years. The bishops of Lincoln and Winchester were appointed his majesty's commissioners for the assessment and collection of this latter grant, and we find the ecclesiastical revenue of the prebend of Banbury set down in the report at £30 a year, the vicar's

salary at £6 13s. 4d., and the annual value of the manor of Grimsbury—a portion of the good things pertaining to the priory of Bicester—at nearly a like sum. It does not appear that the bishop made any return of the revenue arising from his own extensive possessions—an omission which might possibly arise from sheer forgetfulness of so material a portion of his own income, and not from any desire to evade the law.

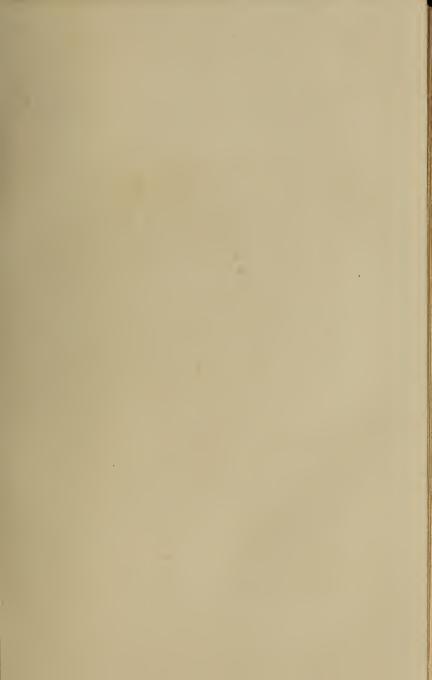
But the war with Scotland and Wallace drained the country of its resources and the king of his cash; so that we find an export duty of forty shillings a bale imposed upon wool, and the clergy mulcted in a fifth of their moveables. This led to another commission of enquiry, and so closely was it conducted in this locality that even the very hens and their eggs were numbered. Nor did the revenue of the bishop escape. In the town and adjacent hundred, this is set down in the return at £170 a year—a large sum in the era to which the date refers.

At this period, great virtues were supposed to be inherent in chalybeate springs, to which were attributed not only the medicinal property of the waters, but also the reputed sanctity of some particular saint. Thus at Astrop, we have St. Rumbold's well—whoever St. Rumbold may have been—a spring bubbling up by the side of the highway, closely adjoining the gamekeeper's house, and about midway between the mansion and village of King Sutton. In after times, this well became famous as the resort of upper class invalids—a sort of rival to Tunbridge and Bath—until the paternity of an illegitimate child was attributed to a fashionable physician, who ever afterwards took umbrage to the waters, and declared

that they were valueless for purposes of medicine. Then there was St. Stephen's well, a short way westward from Banbury, and that of St. Botolph at the village of Farnborough—neither of which, it is true, was so popular as that of the rumbling saint; still both would have their devotees and prilgrims to their shrine. So numerous were these towards the close of the century at which we are now arrived, and so heavy were the exactions on the church's patrimony in support of the helpless cripples who crowded thither in search of an exceedingly problematical cure, that bishop Oliver Sutton, who had succeeded to the episcopate of Lincoln about 1280, found it necessary to exert the authority of his office, and to prohibit the indigent from the practice of making "prilgrimages" to the so-called holy wells.

In 1300, the bishopric of Lincoln again became vacant by the decease of the occupant of its honours, who was succeeded in the same year by John of Allerby. Sir Theobald Barro, the then prebend of Banbury, was promoted shortly afterwards to the bishopric of Liege, and the vacant stall was conferred upon the reverend Sir Hugh of Normanton, a Yorkshire divine, who was already one of the canons in Lincoln cathedral. But in consequence of a misunderstanding arising between the right reverend father and his ecclesiastical protege, the latter never entered on the duties appertaining to his new dignity, and the office was conferred on George Solar of Poreya.

Sir William Wallace had been beheaded on Tower-hill, and king Robert Bruce unfurled the banner of Scotland's independence. The hardy sons of the north flocked to his standard, determined for their country to conquer or die.





Edward approached the Scottish borders with an army as gallant as ever followed a sovereign to the field of strife; but on the 7th of July, 1307, when on the south bank of the Solway and within sight of the Caledonian shore, he was summoned to a higher tribunal than his own by a messenger whose mandate would brook no delay. He was succeeded by his son the second Edward, who was in all things the reverse of his martial sire.

It was about this period that Sir John of Broughton is supposed to have erected the first castle of that name-a structure which is situated about two miles and a half westward from Banbury. Most of the early building has been removed to make room for the present edifice, which belongs to the period of the first James; but there is enough of the old castle incorporated with the new to denote its former strength, and to furnish us with indubitable evidence of its ancient importance. The south front belongs to what is called the Elizabethan order of architecture, and may be regarded as a favourable specimen of a fortified mansion appertaining to the latter period. Surrounded by a moat, and only accessible by a bridge which was defended by a gateway tower of considerable strength, it was well calculated to hold an enemy at bay, in days when modern missiles were unknown. From the slits of the battlemented wall, the bowmen, in comparative safety, could empty their quivers on exposed assailants; but when the deep-booming cannon begun to play a part in the deadly game of war, Broughton became useless for a protracted defence.

The feudal tenure, by which Sir John and his predecessors

held the property in question from the crown, was that he should breed up a falcon for the king; and whenever the court should visit Woodstock, or any other royal residence within twenty miles, the owner of Broughton was then to be in attendance, with the bird perched upon his wrist, in readiness to take part in the pastimes of the period.

Leaving Sir John to build his castle, we must fly our falcon at higher game. The weak-minded monarch, by his lavish conduct towards Sir Piers Gaveston, a knight of Gascony, had lost the respect of many of his nobles, who had been publicly insulted by the courtly favourite. Honours, titles, and wealth had been heaped upon this minion of the crown, until he held the English nobility in actual contempt, and rarely missed an opportunity of wounding their ambition or mortifying their pride. The earls of Lancaster, Warwick, Pembroke, and Hereford formed a powerful combination against the king and his favourite, and having raised an army, they proceeded at once to the north. Edward left Gaveston in Scarborough castle, whilst he too should essay his fortune in the field, and Pembroke speedily laid seige to the fortress. The castle was indifferently supplied with provisions, and on the 19th of May, 1312, Gaveston surrendered himself prisoner, on the express stipulation that for two months he should remain in Pembroke's custody alone; and if, in the course of that period, a mutual accommodation was not brought about, he should then be restored to the castle of Scarborough, which, as to men and means, was to be put in the same condition in which it then was. To this condition, the earl of Pembroke pledged life and land; but small reliance was then to be placed on the

most solemn promise of a foe, and the royal favourite was brought a close prisoner to Deddington castle, where he was left in keeping of a slender garrison.

The vengeful earl of Warwick, the mortal enemy of Gaveston, was no doubt informed by the captor as to how and where he had left his prisoner; for a night march brought the lord of Avondale with an imposing force to the castle gates. Acting probably under the orders of their chief, the garrison refused to offer resistance, and Gaveston was given up to the tender mercies of Warwick, to whom in the day of his prosperity he had applied the epithet, "the black dog of Arden." It must have been indeed a sorry sight to see one whom the king had long "delighted to honour"-one who had espoused the near relative of his sovereign-one who was earl of Cornwall at the time-one who had been lord-lieutenant of Ireland—one who had even filled the high office of "Guardian of the Realm"-mounted on a wretched apology for a mule, and dragged through the streets of Banbury amid the jeers of a ruffian soldiery. Yet after all, it was a just retribution; a degree of deserved vengeance which he had brought upon himself by his overweening pride in the day of his power. Thus was he conducted to Warwick castle, and there, without the slightest regard either for the laws of the land or the articles of capitulation under which he was surrendered, his head fell by a blow of the executioner's axe.

On the 25th of June, 1314, the battle of Bannockburn, so fatal to many of England's chivalry, was fought in the vicinity of Stirling castle. Among the prisoners taken on that eventful day, was John Segrave of Chacombe, a member of

parliament and high constable of Banbury, who had to pay a lumping sum for his ransom.

In 1320, Henry Burwash was raised to the mitre and succeeded John of Allerby in the diocese of Lincoln. In the following year, the system of royal favouritism had again put the barons in commotion, and as the newly-consecrated prelate was suspected of favouring the cause of the insurgents, the sheriff of Oxfordshire was commanded to give the castle of Banbury into the safe keeping of Sir Robert Arden of Wickham; and all the military tenants of the bishop were enjoined on their allegiance, in all things to obey the knight of Wickham, as they would the king himself.

Edward was now wholly under the influence of another favourite, Hugh le de Spencer, who is described as possessed of all those accomplishments so well adapted for captivating the mind of the silly king, and the consequence was, as already hinted, that another combination took place among the nobles. The king's cousin—the lord of six earldoms and head of the house of Lancaster—was at the bottom of the conspiracy; so that his majesty found it necessary to summon all his forces to arms. Sir Robert Arden was again entrusted with the royal commission, and in 1322,-3,-and-4, was empowered to raise the military array throughout the important counties of Oxford and Berks-a duty in which he gave satisfaction to the crown. In the battle of Boroughbridge, fought on the 16th of March, 1322, the rebels under Lancaster were wholly routed, their chief taken prisoner and led to the scaffold.

The queen, forgetting the duties which she owed her

husband, who with all his faults was her husband still, joined the league of the insurgents in 1325, and in the following year, aided by forces from the realm of her brother, she placed herself at the head of a rebel army, and took the field against him whom she had pledged herself to "honour and obey." Edward, now thoroughly alarmed, fled to the west. Here he was disappointed of the assistance he expected to meet, and endeavoured to effect his escape into Ireland. In this he was baffled by contrary winds, and on his return into Wales he was taken prisoner. He was confided to the custody of the earl of Leicester, who treated him with every mark of honour and respect so long as he remained a prisoner in Kenilworth castle: but as this did not meet with the views of those who were now at the helm of affairs, he was removed to Berkeley on the banks of the Severn. Here, on the 21st of September, 1327, he was put to death by a deed so atrocious as to stamp with infamy the character of the age.

Among the most singular of the annals in this king's reign was an attempt made by parliament to regulate the price of provisions by law. It was enacted that the price of the best stall-fed ox was not to exceed £3 10s., whilst £2 8s. was to be the highest price for an ordinary bullock. A two-year-old fat hog was set down at ten shillings; an unshorn wether, five shillings, but if he had been shorn, the price was not to exceed 3s. $6\frac{1}{2}$ d. A fat goose was not to cost more than $7\frac{1}{2}$ d. a fat capon 6d. and a fat hen 3d. Two chickens, four pigeons, or two dozen of eggs were not to exceed the last-named sum; so that if it had not been for the scarcity of the "threepences," a working man, even at those "famine prices," might have

contrived to eke out a comfortable subsistence. But the inexorable law of political economy that supply and demand must ever regulate price, was not long in bringing so clumsy an expedient to an end.

CHAPTER IV.

From Edward IIII. to Henry IV.

The first "Local Improvement" Charter.—Banbury at the Royal Council Table.—The French Wars.—The Banbury Robin Hood—More Fighting—The Plague.—Richard II.—Enclosure of Crouch Hill.—Popular Insurrections.—Deposition of the King.

DWARD III., a boy fifteen years of age, was now called on to ascend the throne; and in the first instance, the government was confided to a council of regency. But the flagrant conduct of his mother, and the unconstitutional proceedings of Mortimer her "friend," induced the young king to take the management of affairs into his own hands, which he did three years afterwards, and Mortimer expiated his offences on a gibbet.

In the first year of this king's reign, a charter was granted under the royal hand, addressed to the "good men of the town of Banbury," authorising them to pave the streets, and giving permission to levy tolls on all goods that might be brought into the town for sale. This authority was to continue for seven years; but the period for levying these contributions was subsequently extended for three years longer, and although

the respective tolls may appear small to us, yet when the low price of material is taken into consideration, and coupled with the nominally small amount of remuneration then accorded to labour, it may reasonably be presumed that the gross sum received was found adequate for the purpose.

Inasmuch as this charter may be regarded as the first step to the improvement of the town, it may not be out of place to enquire into the nature and characteristics of the merchandise on which tolls were authorised to be levied; more particularly as this will give us some little insight into the habits and modes of life which were then common with the people. A cask of wine, a bag of wool, or a quarter of woad, then extensively used in dyeing operations, was each ordered to contribute twopence to the rate. A penny was to be charged for every ten sheep, goats, or swine, for every horse-load of wool, every cart-load of iron, and for every hundred boards that might be brought into town in the expectation of meeting with a purchaser. A half-penny was to be levied on every horse or mare, ox or cow, horse-load of sea-fish, or hundred of mackerel. A horse-load of cloth, a hundred yards of canvas, a bundle of wooden shoes, and a cart-load of charcoal, were each set down for the same small sum. But a quarter of corn, a thousand herrings, and a horse-lead of apples, pears, or nuts, were each to be admitted on payment of a farthing. There were many other articles enumerated in the document, but the foregoing may well suffice as a sample.

Another charter, dated from Kenilworth in 1329, confirms to the bishop of Lincoln the privilege of holding annual fairs, in "his manor of Banbury," on the festival of the Ascen-

sion and in Whitsun week, each of which was to continue for nine days, with all the "liberties and privileges" belonging to the free fairs of this description throughout the kingdom. In the following year, in a document purporting to be granted "from our court at Daventry," we find his majesty authorising the bishop to enclose the wood at Crouch hill, and to empark three hundred acres of the adjoining lands, so that he may "hold them for himself and his successors for ever;" a period of which neither king nor bishop can foresee the termination, nor the changes and mutations which time will bring about—time

"Before whose breath, like blazing flax, Man and his marvels pass away; And changing empires wane and wax, Are founded, flourish, and decay."

About this period also, Sir Robert Arden, of Wickham, must have played a leading part in the annals of the district; for in 1330, we find him receiving royal licence to fortify his mansion at Wickham, to hold a fair annually at Drayton, and to have all the rights of free warrenry and frankpledge in a great number of manors, which are all enumerated in the different grants.

In 1337, Edward was preparing to go to war with France, to the throne of which he had previously laid claim, on the ground of his mother having been the only sister of the three last sovereigns of that kingdom. For this purpose, he wanted money, a commodity without which no war can be waged, and issued precepts commanding the attendance of representatives from certain towns and places of trade, to assist in a council

to be held at Westminster. If we are to judge by the terms of the precept addressed to the bailiffs of Banbury, the duty on which these delegates were summoned was by no means one of the most agreeable kind; for after "commanding and firmly enjoining them" to cause three or four honest and discreet men of the town to attend his majesty in council, he condescends to make use of language sounding rather like a threat: "knowing," says the king, "that if they shall not appear at the day and place named, we will punish both them and you."

It appears that the inhabitants considered the most advisable course was to comply with the royal mandate; for we find the writ endorsed with the names of Robert Basset, John Astrop, and Robert May, as the representatives appointed to confer with royalty. It does not appear from the face of the document what the "urgent affairs" were which required the presence of the "honest and discreet" individuals in question; nor is there any record extant from which we can learn how our Banbury worthies acquitted themselves in council—or rather, at how cheap a rate they managed to get themselves and fellow-townsmen out of a disagreeable dilemma.

Edward now assumed the title of king of France; and having been joined by the Flemings and some of the sovereign princes of Germany, he directed his army against the frontiers of that kingdom to the crown of which he had thus laid claim. He entered the territory of Philip of France at the head of an army amounting to 50,000 men—but composed almost entirely of his foreign levies—and he was met by the French king with a force represented as consisting of nearly double

that number. The hostile troops confronted each other for several days on the plains of Vironfosse, when messages of mutual defiance were exchanged; but as neither party felt sufficiently confident of victory to induce their leaders to hazard the attack, the English monarch withdrew into Flanders and there disbanded his useless army.

This fruitless expedition cost his majesty an immense sum of money, as he had already forestalled his revenue, pawned his jewels, and was nearly £300,000 in debt to foreigners. The English parliament was his only resource; and on his return to this country in 1339, the "collective wisdom of the nation" was accordingly summoned. After exacting several important concessions from the king in favour of the growing liberty of the subject, they granted him an export duty of forty shillings on every bale of wool, on every three hundred fleeces, and also on every last of leather—expressly stipulating, however, that these imposts were only to continue for two years, and were not to be construed into a precedent.

But they did not even stop here; for they gave him an unusual grant—which was to be in force for the same two years—of the ninth sheep, lamb, and fleece on their estates; and from the burgesses, a ninth of all their moveables, to be compounded for at their just valuation. A ninth was also to be deducted from the revenues of the clergy—a class of persons who were generally as averse to parting with their cash as any of their brother sinners of the laity. The reception awarded in Banbury to the assessors of these "ninths," does not seem to have been of the most cordial character, for they report that the inhabitants, "in contempt of our lord the king," have alike

refused to declare the yearly amount of the church living and the value of the chattels in the town.

The first instalment of these subsidies enabled the king, with other aid, to fit out a fleet consisting of 240 vessels. With this, on the 13th of June, 1340, he attacked the French navy off Sluise, and although the latter consisted of 400 vessels manned by 40,000 men, he succeeded in capturing 230 of these ships, whilst 30,000 Frenchmen were slain in the action. But when the English monarch again led his army into France, he found, as before, that Philip was ready for him; so that after another fruitless campaign of three months, a truce was agreed to between the hostile kings, and Edward returned to England in a very bad humour.

The sheriffs, revenue officers, and collectors of taxes were the first to feel the effects of the royal displeasure, and several of the highest dignitaries in the kingdom were imprisoned on the charge of having embezzled to their own use the revenues of the crown. The accusation brought against others was that they had seditiously incited the people to revolt, and to resist the payment of lawful taxes. Among these was William Wybert of Banbury, who appears to have been a sort of compound between bold Robin Hood and Feargus O'Connor; for as he was being conveyed from Banbury to Oxford, in order to suffer the pains and penalties incidental to having stirred up the people to "routs, riots, seditions, and tumults," he made a bolt from his guards in the neighbourhood of Deddington, and hied him across the country like a hunted deer.

It must have been a most exciting chase; but in the end Wybert contrived to give his pursuers the slip, and buried

himself in the shades of Wychwood forest. Here he gathered around him a small but determined band, by whose aid he was enabled for the next eleven years to set at defiance all efforts to effect his capture. During that period, many a fat buck fell to the shafts of the outlaw and his followers-many a collector of the royal revenues was peremptorily summoned to "stand and deliver"-many a stately dignitary of the church was freed from the temptations with which a superabundance of this world's wealth is apt to beset the path of the godly. But an open opposition to constituted authority, and a flagrant violation of the principles of right, are rarely found to prosper in the end; for as Wybert was returning from Arden to Wychwood, having been absent on a predatory excursion in the north, he fell in with a seneschal of the house of Warwick, at the head of a force superior to his own, and as the Banbury outlaw refused to give quarter and scorned to receive it, like the Roman conspirator of old, he fell fighting in the midst of the foe. In the ancient annals, he is sometimes spoken of as "wild and witless Will of Wychwood."

Thomas Beck succeeded Henry Burwash as episcopal chief of the diocese of Lincoln in 1342, and in the course of the same year, Edward landed another army in France, but with the same indifferent success as before, for a hollow truce was again patched up and he returned to England in the following year. The parliament now began in earnest to buckle on for the strife; for in 1344, they advised the king vigorously to prosecute the war, to which hitherto they had yielded but a reluctant assent. For this purpose they granted him unsolicited supplies, charging the counties with a fifteenth of their

produce and the boroughs with a tenth of their moveables. This subsidy enabled Edward to equip another army, which was despatched to Guienne under the command of the earl of Derby. That nobleman was as prudent as he proved himself brave, and in the course of the two following years, he added largely to England's continental possessions; but in 1346, a powerful French army took the field against him, under the command of the dukes of Normandy and Burgundy.

Resolved on succouring his beleaguered subjects, Edward summons a general array, to which Oxford was required to furnish thirty fully-accoutred warriors, Banbury six, Witney four, Chipping Norton three, and Thame three—a computation which will furnish us with some idea of the relative importance of the towns in question towards the middle of the fourteenth century. When this army was mustered, it was found to consist of ten thousand archers, four thousand men-at-arms, ten thousand Welsh infantry, and six thousand Irish. embarked at Southampton on board a fleet of about a thousand sail, and landed at the Hague after a tedious voyage. The disembarkation took place on the 12th of July, when the king took command of the army in person, and one of his first acts was to confer the honour of knighthood upon the prince of Wales—then a youth of fifteen. A ceremony of this nature always furnished a pretext for a pull upon the pockets of those who held their lands by grant from the crown; and we accordingly find that John Butler was taxed for half a knight's fee in Grimsbury, and Sir John Lyons for the fourth part of a knight's fee in Warkworth.

The battle of Cressy was fought and won on the 26th of

August, 13±6, in which France lost between thirty and forty thousand of the bravest of her sons; whilst two of her tributary kings, a like number of her dukes, and four of her earls were numbered with the slain on the field of battle. This was followed by the surrender of Calais to the English king in 1347, in which year John Gunwell succeeded to the mitre of Lincoln.

In 1349-50, the country was swept by a devastating pestilence, which, originating in Asia, had spread its sable wings over the nations of Europe, and introduced the voice of mourning into many a happy home. It appears to have resembled the cholera in its leading features, but was doubtless much more deadly in its results, both from the habits of the people and the absence of those sanatory precautions of which they were ignorant, and which have happily succeeded in depriving this destroyer of two-thirds of his prey. In Banbury alone, upwards of two hundred persons fell victims to the scourge—an awful mortality when the number of the population is taken into account.

It is foreign to our purpose to follow the campaigns of Edward's gallant son—how on the field of Poictiers, in 1356, with an army of twelve thousand men, he routed the enemy though sixty thousand strong, and took their king a prisoner on the field. It boots not to tell how in 1359-60, Edward himself ravaged the fairest districts of France without meeting with a check or encountering a foe. We need not pause to relate how the imprisoned king agreed to pay England three millions of crowns in gold for his ransom, and cede many a lovely province in perpetuity to his conqueror.

To come nearer home, we are told that at this time there were sixty thousand students in the university of Oxford; but although Speed, the eminent historian, vouches for the accuracy of this statement, it will doubtless be surmised that he must either have set down a cipher too many, or that the collegians must have been packed into exceedingly close compass. The year 1363 saw John of Buckingham raised to the see of Lincoln; and in 1369, the "bold baron Mowbray" held the manor of Chacombe. In 1377, Edward III. passed the boundaries of time, after having swayed the sceptre for above half a century, and was succeeded by his grandson the second Richard.

This prince was but eleven years of age when he ascended the throne, and was consequently unfitted by his youth for regulating the affairs of state, which were committed to the conduct of a "Council of Nine," presided over by the three uncles of the king. The charters empowering the bishop of Lincoln to hold the Whitsun-fair in Banbury, granting him the right of free warrenry in his manors around the town, and liberty to enclose the lands about Crouch Hill, were all confirmed under the great seal in 1378. Three years afterwards, in consequence of the imposition of the tax of three groats a head on every person above fifteen years of age, a general insurrection of the working classes took place under Wat Tyler, the Essex blacksmith, and sundry other popular leaders. The demands of the insurgents were marked by extreme moderation, requiring the abolition of vassalage and villainage, and the freedom of commerce in market towns. The insurrection was suppressed and the ringleaders executedthe young king exhibiting a promptitude and coolness that raised high expectations from his future career—expectations which were far from being justified by the result. Nearly the whole of his reign was he embroiled with the nobility, and impeachments and murder were of frequent occurrence.

In 1398, whilst the parliament was sitting at Shrewsbury, Henry Beaufort of King's Sutton succeeded to the bishopric of Lincoln and the concomitant lordship of the castle and manors of Banbury. On the 4th of July in the following year, the king's cousin, the banished duke of Lancaster, landed at Ravenspur in Yorkshire; and the monarch, having been deserted by his adherents, fled to Anglesea. He was subsequently taken prisoner, and in the course of the same year was either murdered or starved to death in the stronghold at Pontefract—a fate differing widely from his former fortune, when his household consisted of ten thousand persons, three hundred of whom were employed in the royal kitchen.

CHAPTER V.

From Henry FV. to Henry VIII.

Usurpation and Insurrection.—The Chantry of St. Mary.—Invasion of France.—Henry V. and VI.—Bicester Priory.—The Chantry Incorporated.—The Baron of Hook Norton.—Lord Saye and Jack Cade.—The Wars of the Roses.—Edward IV.—The Battle of Edgcote.—Execution of Pembroke.

ENRY IV., the first sovereign of the House of Lancaster, now assumed the regal power and title, although not the lineal heir to the throne. An insurrection, headed by Percy son of the earl of Northumberland, was suppressed at the battle of Shrewsbury, fought on the 21st of

July, 1403, which was decided in the king's favour. The only other noteworthy events that occurred in this reign—at least so far as the district under notice is concerned—was the translation of Henry of Lincoln to the see of Winchester, in 1405, and the appointment of Philip Reapington as his successor. Turkeys brought a good price during this king's reign, for we find from the records of the priory of Bicester, that when the brotherhood were wanting some little better fare than ordinary, they used to send for it to Banbury market, and the price of two of these fowls is set down as having cost them 15s. 11d. In the thirteenth year of his reign, the fourth Henry slept with his fathers, and his son Henry V. ascended the throne.

The chantry of St. Mary in Banbury was founded in the first year of this reign, by a donation of "twelve messuages and a moiety of a virgate of land," in Banbury, Wickham, and Neithrop, from Richard of Eton, William Harris, John Warr, John of Towcester, and John Danvers of Calthorpe House—the proceeds of the property to be devoted to the maintenance of two chaplains, to pray for the welfare of the king, the prebend of Banbury, the founders whilst living, and the repose of their souls when dead.

We need not pause to note the progress now being made by the Lollards and followers of Wickliffe—the forerunners of that reformation which in future ages was destined to effect so great a change in the manners and habits, as well as in the religious tenets of the people. Nor need we allude to the causes which led to a renewal of war with France, to another invasion of that kingdom, and to the victory of Agincourt in 1415. In 1420, we find another change in the lordship of Banbury by the elevation of Richard the Fleming to the see of Lincoln. When the king's power was at its height, and after he had been publicly acknowledged successor to the throne of France, Henry V. was struck down by a painful malady, and yielded up the ghost in 1422.

The infant Henry VI. was now proclained king of England, France, and Ireland—a large weight of honour for so young a brow. But the Maid of Orleans took up arms for her country. An enthusiast herself, she infused new spirits into the drooping courage of those who had hitherto but feebly supported the cause of French independence, and numerous were the reverses sustained by the English through the means of her hardihood and daring. The English army was but indifferently supplied with the necessaries requisite to carry on a campaign; for instead of providing these, the royal treasury was exhausted in the repayment of loans-of which the men of Banbury came in for the reimbursement of "a hundred shillings." By the records of the Priory of Bicester, we learn that the rents received for the brotherhood from Grimsbury amounted to £13 6s. 8d. a year; whilst those drawn from Deddington, Hempton, and Clifton, annually exceeded the sum of £37. In 1431, William Grey was promoted to the bishopric of Lincoln, and was succeeded in 1436 by the then bishop of Norwich.

In 1448, the king granted a licence to the founders of the chantry of Saint Mary and others, to form themselves into a perpetual guild or brotherhood, to be governed by a warden or master, who should be elected annually from amongst

themselves; and they were also authorised to receive into their number those who from motives of devotion might be induced to join them. Permission was given them to have a common seal, to institute or defend suits at law in their corporate capacity, and notwithstanding the statute of mortmain, to acquire lands, tenements, or other property. Royal licences of this description were obtained in those days at a cheaper rate than our modern acts of parliament, seeing that the ordinance in question cost but a fee of "twenty marks paid into the hanaper."

The earl of Suffolk and baron of Hook Norton at this time rose to be a "man of mark." His "blood," it is true, was not of the purest water of nobility, seeing that one of his immediate progenitors had been engaged in trade; yet in consequence of the part which he had taken in bringing about a marriage between the king and Margaret of Anjou, he was created first a marquis, then a duke, and finally was appointed first minister of the crown. Without doubt, he was accessory to the murder of the duke of Glo'ster in 1447, and the cession of the territory of Maine to the queen's uncle added greatly to his unpopularity. He was impeached by the Commons in 1450, and in his defence referred triumphantly to his thirtyfour campaigns, in which he had proved his devotion to the interests of his country, by bravely doing his best for the maintenance of her honour—to the fact of his father and three of his brothers having fallen in battle during the wars with France—to his seventeen years' absence in England's service. during the whole of which period he had kept her banners unfurled in a land of foemen—to his wounds, to his imprisonment, and to the ransom he had paid. But it was all in vain! The king himself sealed his sentence of banishment for five years. He was intercepted by his enemies on his passage to France, seized near Dover, his head struck off on the gunwale of a boat, and his body thrown into the sea.

Lord Saye, the royal chamberlain and lord treasurer of the kingdom, was impeached at the same time and committed to the Tower. On the fall of Suffolk, an insurrection took place among the populace of Kent, headed by Jack Cade, who gave himself the high-sounding name of Sir John Mortimer. He was certainly a radical reformer, although he went rather in a rough way to work. He pointed out the abuses in government and demanded their summary redress. A small force was sent against him under Sir Humphrey Stafford, which he encountered at Sevenoaks, and defeated after a short but sharp skirmish, during which the royalist commander was slain. Elated with victory, Cade advanced upon London and encamped at Blackheath. His force now amounted to thirty thousand men, and the king and council removed to Kenilworth. The citizens of London opened their gates to the insurgents, and for some time the strictest order was preserved. But to gratify his followers, Cade caused lord Save to be brought from the Tower, and along with Cromer, sheriff of Kent, he was subjected to a form of trial at the Guildhall. Charges the most absurd were brought against the prisoners, but they were condemned notwithstanding—and as in popular tumults, execution follows close upon the heels of judgment, they were hurried to Cheapside, where they suffered under the headsman's axe. Barbarities the most shocking

were practised on the senseless bodies of the dead, to which no further allusion need be made than to say that they were in keeping with the character of an uncivilised age. In open contempt of the orders of their leader, the insurgents next broke into and plundered a rich man's house, on which the inhabitants shut the gates against them, and aided by a detachment of troops from the Tower, succeeded in repulsing them with considerable loss. On a promise of pardon—which, by the bye, was never kept—the insurgents retired upon Rochester and there disbanded.

In 1452, Richard duke of York, the rightful heir to the throne, at the head of an army of ten thousand men, demanded the dismissal of the duke of Somerset from the government, and a reformation in the affairs of the kingdom. In the course of the same year, John Chedworth was elevated to the see of Lincoln, and became for the time lord paramount of Banbury. John Norman, a native of Banbury, was lord mayor of London in 1453, and as the intellect of the easy-going king at that time gave way, Norman's influence was not unfelt in the destinies of the nation. As the illness of the king continued to increase, the duke of York was appointed Lieutenant of the kingdom in 1454, and invested for a time with supreme power.

Although not more intimately connected with Banbury than with the rest of the kingdom, we shall glance at the leading incidents of the Wars of the Roses, for the purpose of giving the reader a connected narrative. The first battle of St. Albans, fought on the 22nd of May, 1455, was decided in favour of the house of York, five thousand of the Lancastrians having been slain and the king himself being taken prisoner. The

duke of York was then appointed Protector of the kingdom; but in the following year, the queen produced her husband before the House of Lords, in one of his lucid intervals, and he was forthwith reinstated in regal power. In 1459, the Lancastrians under lord Audley were defeated by the earl of Salisbury at Bloreheath in Staffordshire; and in the following year, they had no better fortune, when they again encountered the Yorkists at Northampton, under the command of lords Audley, March, and Warwick. In this action, the imbecile king was again taken prisoner. In October, 1460, a compromise was agreed to in parliament, by which it was arranged that the title of king should be continued to Henry during his life; but that supreme power should in the meantime be lodged in the hands of the duke of York, who was also appointed to succeed to the throne.

This gave mortal umbrage to the clever queen, who by her artful address, and lavish promises to the barons of the north, was soon at the head of an army of twenty thousand men. She met the duke of York at Wakefield on the 24th of December, defeated the five thousand men whom he had under his command, and his head graced with a paper coronet—for he was slain in the action—was placed on the wall of the city from which his title is derived. His son Edward, now head of the house of York, asserted his claim and title to the crown—a claim that was not only well founded, but backed by the whole power of his party. He defeated lord Pembroke at Mortimer's Cross in 1461—a victory for which the queen gained a compensation by vanquishing the earl of Warwick at the second battle of St. Albans, when she recovered possession

of the imprisoned king. Hers was, however, but a short-lived success; for Edward came up by rapid marches with his small but victorious army, and speedily rallied the broken followers of Warwick. The queen retired northward with her army, and Edward entered London where he was proclaimed king.

At the battle of Touton in Yorkshire, fought on the 29th of March of the same year, the young king gained a decisive victory over the duke of Somerset, and thirty-six thousand Lancastrians are computed to have been slain in the action or perished in the pursuit.

The Queen fled into Scotland, raised an army of adventurous spirits there, received reinforcements from France, and having been joined by large numbers of partizans of the house of Lancaster, ventured to tempt once more her fortunes in the field. But the fickle goddess seems to have deserted her, for at Hexham in Northumberland, on the 15th of May, 1464, the last hope of regaining the throne appeared to vanish, as her followers were again scattered in flight.

King Edward IV. was not endowed with even ordinary caution; for whilst the earl of Warwick was absent in France, negociating a marriage between his sovereign and the French king's sister, the whole affair was rendered abortive by Edward secretly marrying a daughter of Sir Richard Woodville and widow of John Gray, who fell in fight at the second battle of St. Albans, doing his devoir under the banner of the house of Lancaster. Honours in abundance were showered upon the relatives of the new queen, and every token which they received of the monarch's esteem was regarded by the earl of Warwick as a fresh insult to himself.

In 1469, a rebellion broke out in Yorkshire, which had its origin in a grant to the hospital of St. Leonard in that county, and the insurgents were eventually headed by Sir Henry Neville, a relative of the earl of Warwick, and Sir John Conyers, a baronet of considerable military experience. It does not appear that the insurrection originated in any express intrigue entered into by Warwick for the purpose of overturning the reigning dynasty; but in all likelihood the leaders were aware of the private opinions of that powerful nobleman and were fully cognisant of the fact that such a consummation would by no means rouse the baron's wrath. When the rebels first appeared at the gates of York, they barely mustered fifteen thousand men; but the ranks of disaffection were speedily increased, and full forty thousand marched southward under their banners.

The earl of Pembroke, at the head of a force variously computed to consist of from ten to eighteen thousand Welshmen, was ordered by the king to oppose their advance, and was joined by the earl of Devonshire with a body of five thousand west-country archers. On the 23rd of July, this gallant array entered the town of Banbury, and on the 24th and 25th, there were some slight skirmishes between the advanced posts of the hostile armies. On the last-named day, the Welshmen were drawn up on Edgcote hill, the insurgents fronting them on that of Chipping Warden. The sun had passed the meridian, but still the western bowmen appeared not on the field. The orb of day was sinking westward, but the sound of their trumpet had not yet broke upon the listening ear. Leaving the army under the command of the undaunted Sir Richard

Herbert, his brave brother, the earl of Pembroke galloped to the town, to see what had become of his absent ally. He found the archers scattered about, each enjoying himself as suited his fancy, and the commander, who ought to have set his men an example of subordination and readiness, was engaged in dallying with the barmaid of an inn. Pembroke took him by the shoulders and turned him out of the house. But as the result showed, it was a sorry job for both; for the mortified nobleman, on being thus summarily ejected from the presence of his lady-love, ordered his battalions to fall in, and marched off to Chipping Norton the same afternoon, leaving his brother general to compete with the Yorkshiremen as best he might.

On rejoining his army in the field, Pembroke found them engaged with the insurgent vanguard under the command of Sir Henry Neville. That rash youth had advanced too far in front of his supports—an oversight which led to his being hemmed in and eventually made prisoner. As a rebel taken in arms, he was led behind the lines, and without the smallest ceremony or form of trial, he breathed his last prayer and was left a headless trunk. This closed the action for that day, and both armies rested on their arms, awaiting with anxiety the coming morrow.

In the course of the night, several deserters from the royal army carried intelligence to the insurgents of the defalcation of the archers, and with the first peep of dawn the Yorkshire bowmen commenced the attack. The fatal shafts fell thicker and thicker, and as the royalists had no means of returning such favours, they were forced to leave their ground of vantage on the hill in order to come to close quarters on the plain.

The battle became general throughout the whole line. The sun rose high in the heavens, shedding his rays of light and love upon a scene of human havoc and ungovernable rage. Men for a time were transformed into demons—demons thirsting for the blood of their kind. Many a manly bosom was gored that day by a foeman's steel, and many a hoary head laid low in the midst of the carnage then raging around. "St. David to the rescue! Cymbri advance!" Onward pressed the sons of the mountain on foot—onward swept the horsemen and men-at-arms. Pembroke, conspicuous by his snowy plume which floated high above the struggling throng, was present wherever the strife was most deadly. His brave brother, battle-axe in hand, twice hewed his way through the welded battalions of the sons of the north, and twice he regained his own ranks in safety.

"St George for merry England! a Warwick! a Warwick!"
The cry is echoed from the height of Culworth, and a body of about six hundred men, who had been hurriedly levied in Northampton and the neighbourhood, by John Clapham, Esq. one of the officers of lord Warwick's household, may be seen pressing forward to the scene of strife. This reinforcement completely changes the aspect of the field. Until now, the royalists have decidedly the advantage, and the king's name has been a "tower of strength." But the appearance of these fresh forces on the scene—headed with the well-known escutcheon of the bear and ragged staff—infuses new courage into the ranks of the insurgents and spurs them on to fresh exertions. Panic and dismay are everywhere prevalent amid the adverse host, and the routed royalists break and fly. Vain is

every effort of the leaders to rally them! In vain does Pembroke spur his dying charger amid his broken squadrons and call upon his men to bear in mind their former fame and strike another bold blow for their king! In vain does Sir Richard Herbert brandish his dripping axe over the heads of the runaways, and threaten them with instant death unless they turn and renew the conflict!

"St. George for merry England! a Warwick and a Neville!" The earl of Pembroke is a prisoner, and in attempting to rescue him, his gallant brother becomes a captive also. All order is completely lost, and individual effort is now only directed to the attainment of individual safety. They throw away every thing that can retard their flight, and leaving five thousand of their comrades slain upon the field or killed in the pursuit, those who only two days before had strode forth so proudly to the scene of a prematurely-anticipated triumph, now rush through the streets of Banbury a routed, disorganized, and flying rabble, pursued by a triumphant and unsparing foe.

On the second day after the battle, the town was the scene of a bloody drama. Ten of the captives who were highest in ank are brought in chains to the church porch, and are there informed of the doom that awaited them. The earl of Pembroke freely offered his own head to the executioner, only beseeching his captors to spare his brother. But mercy to the vanquished was a virtue rarely practised in these ironhearted times, and the prisoners were informed that the same clemency, and no more, which they had shown to Sir Henry Neville should now be extended to themselves. There

stands the fatal block surrounded by a strong guard of insurgents—the headsman and his axe are there, ready, too ready for their horrid work—the prisoners are told to prepare for their doom—the blood-encrusted weapon is raised on high—it falls on the neck with a sickening sound—again, again, again it descends, and ten ghastly human heads may be seen lying in the church porch.

This contest appears to have re-opened the flood-gates of slaughter, the sluices of which had been so recently let down. The king very properly imputed the loss of the battle of Banbury to the desertion of the earl of Devonshire; so he ordered the nobleman in question to be taken into custody and served in the same summary manner as that by which his quondam colleague had fallen—a command which was promptly obeyed, for at Bridgewater lord Devonshire was brought to the scaffold. On the other hand, the victorious insurgents proceeded to Grafton, where they took lord Rivers and Sir John Woodville prisoners. The queen's father and brother, having thus fallen into merciless hands, were taken to Northampton and there beheaded.

We have now arrived at the most confused era of England's history. Comines and the continuator of the annals of Croyland assert that about this period the king was taken prisoner and carried first to Warwick and subsequently to York, of which lord Warwick's brother was archbishop. They state that he made his escape from the hunting field, or by bribing his keepers, and chased the rebels out of the kingdom. But we agree with Hume in thinking the whole story a fabrication, as in the royal manifesto against the duke of Clarence and earl of

Warwick (Claus. 10 Edward IV. m. 7.8.) in which all their crimes and treasons are enumerated, no mention is made of any such fact; and the probabilities are that if such a charge could have been truly brought, an offence so heinous would not have been omitted. The fact seems to be, that the king at this time placed an implicit but ill-deserved confidence both in his brother Clarence and his subject Warwick, by whose advice he issued a pardon to the rebels, who consequently dispersed and proceeded to their homes.

In 1470, Warwick and Clarence were expelled the kingdom; but they returned the same year, and after a campaign of eleven days, during which no battle was fought, king Edward was an exile in a land of strangers, and Henry VI. was reconducted from the Tower to the throne. On the 25th of March, 1471, king Edward returns and lands at Ravenspur with only two thousand men, gave Warwick the slip as he was assembling an army, and re-entered London on the 11th of April. Three days afterwards, he encountered the earl of Warwick at Barnet, who-although he was deserted during the night by the duke of Clarence and ten thousand of his bravest men-maintained an unequal contest during an arduous day, and was slain fighting on foot in the midst of his troops. In this battle also, William lord Saye and Sele was slain, fighting for a cause in which he had already suffered greatly, not only in purse and property but also in person, and the title remained for some time in abeyance. This nobleman was the son of the lord Saye and Sele who met with so unceremonious a death in Cheapside, and was the first of his family connected with this district, as by his marriage with the

heiress of William of Wickham, the manor of Broughton had passed into his hands.

In the course of the same year, Thomas Scott, bishop of Rochester, was promoted to the see of Lincoln and the concomitant lordship of Banbury; and in 1480, John Russell, lord chancellor of the kingdom, succeeded to the vacant episcopal throne.

In 1482, whilst engaged in preparations for a war with France, the king was seized with a malady which hurried him to the tomb, leaving his son only thirteen years of age, who was proclaimed under the title of Edward V. to the tender mercies of Richard duke of Gloucester, in whom was vested the powers of regent. It is unnecessary here to dwell on the murder of the two princes in the tower, an event that occurred in 1483, or to the subsequent enormities of a tyrant whose memory is now held in general detestation. Nor need we pause to detail how, on the 22nd of August, 1485, he fought and fell upon the field of Bosworth, leaving his competitor the earl of Richmond the successful claimant to the diadem of England.



CHAPTER VI.

From Henry VIII. to Queen Mary.

The Accession of the Victor.—Perkin Warbeck.—The King holds his court at Banbury.—Henry VIII.—Banbury Grammar School.—The Reformation.—The Parliament braves the Pope.—A Commission and Visitation.—Suppression of the lesser Monasteries.—Wroxton Priory.—Court of Augmentation.—Another Visitation.—Sale of Grimsbury.—Death of Henry and Accession of Edward VI.—Dissolution of St. Mary's Guild and Chantry.—The manor of Banbury transferred to the Crown.—Abolition of the Prebend's stall.

OD save king Henry! This was the pleasing note which saluted the victor on the field of strife; and by his subsequent marriage with the princess Elizabeth, he united the conflicting claims of York and Lancaster—elements of confusion which had occasioned the shedding of so much blood. In 1488, we find a Banbury man raised high in the courts of law, as Sir William Danvers of Calthorpe was then promoted to the dignity of Lord Chief Justice of the court of Common Pleas. He is represented as having been a shrewd politician and thoroughly versed in the intricacies of law, but like many other judges of the olden time, not always impervious to the temptation of a bribe.

In 1493, the pretensions set forth by Perkin Warbeck, and the acknowledgment of his claim by the duchess of Burgundy, induced many to espouse his cause. Among these was Sir Simon Montfort, lord of the manors of Fenny Compton and Wormleighton, who seconded the interests of Warbeck with alacrity and zeal. But the conspiracy was soon crushed, and with many others—both noblemen and gentlemen—Montfort was taken prisoner, tried, and condemned. Thus he paid for his treason with the loss of his head, and his confiscated manors were conferred by the king on William Cope of Hanwell and Hardwick, who was at that time high treasurer of his majesty's household.

In 1495, Chancellor Smith of Oxford was created bishop of Lincoln, and Banbury became his favourite residence. In the month of February, 1500, the king held his court in Banbury castle, and it is more than probable that here he had several interviews with the nuncio of pope Alexander VI. who visited England in the spring of that year for the purpose of inducing Henry to take the command of an army for the recovery of the Holy Land. His Majesty, however, declined the honour, unless on such conditions as he knew the pontiff would be unable to grant. There must have been gay doings then in the good old town; for although Henry himself was sullen and morose, yet his courtiers were by no means of the same unamiable temper, so that hunting, and hawking, and all the other amusements of the period, varied the routine of each day's enjoyment.

On the death of Arthur prince of Wales, which took place only a few months after his marriage with Catharine of Arragon, Henry, unwilling to give up the large dowry which he had received with the princess, obtained a dispensation from Rome, and had the espousals of her marriage contracted with prince Henry, then only twelve years of age. On the 22nd of April, 1509, death knocked at his majesty's door, and

Henry VIII. ascended the throne at the early age of eighteen years. At the commencement of his reign, he was one of the most popular monarchs that ever swayed the sceptre over devoted subjects; but ere its close, he had enemies sufficient to find his active mind in full employment.

At this period, the Banbury grammar school rose to its culminating point of greatness, under the mastership of Mr. Thomas Stanbridge; and we are informed upon pretty reliable authority that its books and modes of teaching were adopted as models by seminaries which now rank among the highest in the kingdom. The "Stanbridge Grammar" occupies a celebrated place among the scholastic works of the period, and in the foundation statutes of the grammar school of Manchester, it is ordained that the master shall be able to teach the children grammar after the manner practised in the school at Banbury. It is thought, and that too by writers of no mean note, that the statutes of the celebrated City of London school, in Milk Street, Cheapside, were copied from those of the Banbury institution.

At the death of Bishop Smith in 1514, he bequeathed £100 to the hospitium of St. John, besides £60 which he had given in his lifetime, and though these appear small sums in this moneyed age, yet in those days they figured as of no inconsiderable amount. He was succeeded in the episcopate by the prime minister Wolsey; but the bishopric of Lincoln was too lowly to satisfy this prelate's ambition, and he was accordingly translated to the arch-diocese of York. He was succeeded in the former by William Atwater, and at his death, the chancellor of Oxford was appointed to the supervision of the vacant see.

We shall not follow Henry in his continental policy or continental wars, but will come at once to that era by which his reign will ever be distinguished—the Reformation. In detailing the course of events, it forms no part of the narrator's duty to institute comparisons between competing forms of conflicting faith, or to play the part of an adherent or a partisan, and claim the palm of superiority for a favoured creed. Let the theologian defend his own peculiar opinions, and maintain intact those doctrines which he may consider essential to the welfare of mankind; but it is the privilege—nay the paramount duty of the historian, to weigh well the contradictory statements of those writers who have gone before him, whose opinions he may consider worthy of credence, and then truthfully to place on record the actions of men, who in their day and generation exercised a large amount of influence for weal In the compilation of a local history like this, the writer may well dispense with criticising these men's motives or analysing their character, and may rest satisfied with detailing the effects of their actions, as experienced in the particular locality of which he is endeavouring to place the annals upon record.

Therefore, without going into the enumeration of the causes which led to the secession of Henry VIII. from continuing his fealty to the hierarchy of Rome, of which in the early part of his reign he had been so devoted an adherent as to obtain the proud title "Defender of the Faith," suffice it to say, that under the influence of powerful passions, and hurried onwards by events which he was unable to control, the monarch was induced at length to hurl back the anathema which the Roman

€

pontiff had dared to launch against his head, and to bid defiance to a power which had for ages kept the world in awe.

In the year 1534, the parliament ventured on the enactment of laws wholly subversive of the authority of the pope. It had already proscribed all appeals to Rome and denied that the apostolic chamber had any right to interfere in the affairs of England. It now declared, by other statutes, that no convocation of the clergy should take place without the king's express permission; that the canons of the church should be thoroughly revised; that in future the pope should have no share in the election of an English bishop; that "Peter's Pence" should be abolished; that all procurations, delegations, bulls, and dispensations from Rome should be abrogated; that all religious houses should be subject to the visitation of the Archbishop of Canterbury; and that the church should give an account of all its manors, tythes, and revenues, to certain commissioners appointed by the crown.

The report of that commission, under the head of "Diocese of Lincoln and Deanery of Deddington," gives us the following particulars with reference to Banbury:—The revenue of the Hospital of St. John, after paying the quit-rent for houses held of the bishop, was returned at £15 a year; the prebendary of Banbury, held at the time by Dr. Matthew Smythe, was after similar deductions set down at £46 6s. 8d; the annual value of the vicarage, in the incumbency of Dr. Dingley, was reported at £22; the revenues of the guild and chantry of St. Mary were returned at £58 a year; the rents and perquisites of the bishop of Lincoln, arising from the town and parish of Banbury, subject to the deduction for the

payment of his bailiff, were set down as amounting to £16; whilst the returns of the castle-reeve show a yearly revenue of upwards of £69, subject to deductions amounting to £26 8s. By another document we learn that the Priory of Wroxton received from Banbury, in yearly rental for five houses and a piece of land, the sum of £2 3s. 4d. subject to a deduction of six shillings a year for chief and quit-rents.

Throughout the whole country, the elements of confusion were now actively at work. The monks, a numerous body of organised men, knew that the duration of their power in England was dependant upon the re-establishment of the papal authority, and conscious that they must stand or fall together, exerted both their influence and eloquence to stay the progress of the doctrines of the reformation. As openly as they dared, they even went the length of charging Henry himself with the most atrocious crimes. On the other hand, the followers of Wycliffe and Luther were neither sparing of invective nor behind-hand in declamation. They imputed to the monks those frequent fasts which impoverished industry to enrich idleness. They charged them with superstition in placing a higher value on the outward observance of the formulas prescribed by their church than in purity of heart or sanctity of life. They accused them of indulging in gross sensuality, and of using the garb of their profession for the accomplishment of most unholy desires. The result was that a commission was appointed for the purpose of instituting enquiries into the morals of the brotherhood; and on their report, in 1536, an act was passed for the dissolution of the lesser monasteries. The preamble of the act ran thus: "That

whereas small religious houses, under the number of twelve persons, have been long and notoriously guilty of the most abominable vices, and consumed and wasted the church lands in their possession;" it was therefore enacted that all religious houses whose revenues did not amount to £200 a year should be suppressed, and the inmates "compelled to reform their lives." There can be no doubt that a desire to become possessed of the revenues of these institutions had as much to do with the framing of this enactment as any wish on the king's part to promote morality; for we find that no fewer than three hundred and seventy-six of these monasteries came under the operation of the act, and their revenues amounting to £32,000 a year—an immense sum in those days—were unceremoniously handed over to the monarch's coffers. In addition to this, their plate and household goods were ordered to be sold, and realised an additional £100,000. The Priory of Wroxton was included in the lesser monasteries thus summarily dealt with -its revenues only amounting to £133 13s. 4d. a year-and if Dugdale may be believed, it was ordered to be destroyed; but at all events, it ceased to be devoted to religious purposes, and the building and furniture changed owners.

A "Court of Augmentation" was established for the valuation and disposal of the property which thus fell to the Crown, and Sir Thomas Pope, a native of Deddington, was appointed treasurer of this court. In Warton's life of Pope, we are informed that this statesman received the elements of his education at Banbury grammar school, and that he subsequently studied at Eton; that at his father's death, his sisters were left with £40 a-piece, his mother to receive one half of the

rental of the land, and the other half to accumulate till Master Thomas should be of age. The old gentleman also bequeathed to every god-child a sheep; to Clifton Chapel, 6s. 8d.; to "Our Lady," to St. Thomas, to the torches, to the bells, the magnificent behest of 3s. 4d. each.

After his appointment to the treasurership of the court of augmentation, like many other courtiers around Henry's throne, Sir Thomas appears to have been sufficiently alive to his own interest; for though the property at Wroxton Priory was in the first instance leased to Mr. William Rainsford, yet in the following year, that gentleman "sold" his lease to the Treasurer, who also obtained from the Crown the reversion of all the other property belonging to the Priory, situated in the parishes of Wroxton and Balscot.

The king and his courtiers, having thus had their appetites for wealth whetted rather than appeased by the suppression and confiscation of the lesser monasteries, now turned their attention to the larger institutions of a similar character. Another "Visitation" was appointed in 1538, which ended in the dissolution of five hundred and forty-five monasteries—twenty-eight of which had abbots privileged to sit in parliament. In order to reconcile the people to these sweeping changes, Henry settled pensions for life on many of the monks and abbots, gave large donations to his most favoured courtiers, and established six new bishoprics, of which that of Oxford was taken from the see of Lincoln.

In conjunction with his ally the emperor of Germany, Henry declared war with France in 1544, landed at Calais with an army of thirty thousand men, and laid siege to the strongholds of Boulogne and Montreuil. In order to fit out this force for the field, as a matter of course the king wanted money, and not being so well versed as modern statesmen in the various interesting methods of imposing taxation, he was under the necessity of borrowing from those who had it. These gentry, however, required some more tangible security than royal promises or exchequer bonds, so we find that a grant of the manor of Grimsbury, being part of the lands of the Priory of Bicester, was made to Thomas Blencowe of Marston St. Lawrence, for certain sums advanced by him to the crown. The manor in question consisted of seven hundred and sixty acres, and was sold by Blencowe to Sir Anthony Cope of Hanwell, vice-chamberlain of the household to Queen Catharine Parr, the last of the monarch's many wives.

In the year 1547, the Eighth Henry was consigned to the tomb, and Edward VI. ascended the throne. The duke of Somerset, the young king's uncle by the mother's side, held the high office of "Frotector of England" during the early part of the reign, and immediately set about the enactment of a law which gave the revenues of all guilds, chantreys, and colleges to the crown. The preamble premised that these funds should be devoted to good and godly uses—to erect grammar schools, augment the revenues of the universities, and make provision for the poor and needy. Cranmer and several other bishops opposed the measure, on the ground that it would unnecessarily impoverish the church; but the influence of the protector was too strong for the primate, and the proposed bill passed into a law.

The report of the commissioners appointed under the act

states that in the parish of St. Mary, Banbury, there were four hundred and sixty persons of age, and that the guild or brotherhood in that parish had been founded by Henry V. who had given certain lands and possessions for the maintenance of three priests, a clerk, and a sexton, who were to receive in all the sum of £25 6s. 8d. a year. The commissioners further bore testimony that the clear yearly value of the property of the guild amounted to £44 15s. 9d. after paying £10 8s. to the maintenance of twelve poor men and women as well as £7 13s. 6d. ground-rent to the lords of the manor. They directed the auditor and receiver to continue the payment of the two last mentioned sums as usual; but the commissioners seem to have been of opinion that one preacher was sufficient for the duties of the office, and appointed William Barrington to the situation, with a yearly salary of £6 6s. 8d. Thus was dissolved the brotherhood of Saint Mary, which had been in existence for 130 years.

About this time, bishop Holbeach of Rochester was "translated" from that diocese to the more lucrative emoluments of the see of Lincoln, and thus became lord paramount of Banbury. In consequence of a previous bargain entered into between the court and the bishop-elect, the latter conveyed over to the king and his courtiers some thirty manors pertaining to the bishopric, and among others that of Banbury was transferred to the crown. Thus was severed the connection that had existed for centuries between the inhabitants of the borough and their liege-lord the bishop—a connection, however, which had been materially weakened by the erection of Oxford into a bishop's see.

Following the example of this unworthy ecclesiastical superior, the Rev. Henry Parry, being elevated to occupy the prebend's stall in Lincoln cathedral, "gave, granted, bargained, and sold" the said prebendary—with the parsonage house thereunto appertaining—to Sir John Thynne and Sir Robert Keylway, in consideration of certain "great sums of money" which he had received at their hands. In this transaction, the purchasers seem only to have been acting as agents for the duke of Northumberland, who, in 1551, for "divers causes, considerations, and recompences," sold the prebendal property in Banbury to the king, who was thus owner of the castle, lord of the manor, and proprietor of considerable territorial possessions, both in the town and its immediate neighbourhood.

CHAPTER VII.

The Reign of Queen Mary.

The disputed Succession.—Lady Jane Grey.—How Banbury acted.—Its Loyalty and Reward.—The first Charter of Incorporation.—Great Rejoicings.—Mysteries of the Middle Ages.—"Ride a Cock Horse."—Antiquated Modes of Punishment.—The Borough's first Member.—The Bye-Laws.—Re-establishment of the Church of Rome.

AVING reigned only six years, the youthful king Edward was consigned to the tomb, and as the event was followed by a dispute concerning the succession—a quarrel in which the inhabitants of Banbury took an active part—it is necessary to the proper understanding of the question, that there should be a brief explanation as to the origin of the disagreement.

The late king had two sisters by the father's side, Mary and Elizabeth; but through the instrumentality of the powerful duke of Northumberland, a rival was found to contest their claims. The lady Jane Grey, a grandaughter of Mary Tudor the youngest sister of Henry VIII., had been married to Guildford Dudley, fourth son of the duke of Northumberland; and prior to Edward's decease, this ambitious noble had prevailed upon the dying king to cause letters patent to be drawn up, setting aside his own half sisters, and naming the lady Jane as his successor. On the death of the royal youth, Northumberland was anxious to secure the persons of the two princesses, and concealing the fact that their sovereign and brother had passed away from the cares of earth, he caused the pliant council to write to them, requesting their presence at that brother's sick-bed. Mary, who was then in the north, hurried up on receipt of the summons, and had proceeded as far as Hunsdon in Hertfordshire, when a letter reached her from the earl of Arundel, informing her of her brother's death, and warning her of the danger to which she would be exposed if she trusted herself in Northumberland's power. On receipt of the intelligence, she galloped off to Framlingham in Suffolk, whence she summoned the nobles to repair to her standard, and gave orders that throughout England she should be proclaimed its queen.

Sir Thomas Pope of Wroxton and Sir Anthony Cope of Hanwell were among the number of those who espoused their legitimate sovereign's cause; and acted upon by their influence, as well as by a sense of the justice of Mary's claim, the inhabitants of Banbury assembled in full conclave at the great cross

in the horse fair, and there formal proclamation was made, that she alone was the lawful inheritor of the crown. did they rest satisfied with merely joining in the cry of "God save the queen!" for a band of volunteers were enrolled upon the spot, and joining the levies of the earl of Huntingdon, gathered from the counties of Bucks and Northampton, amounting in all to four thousand men, marched off to Suffolk to support the cause of their royal mistress. By their contributions of money and the munitions of war, those who remained at home manifested their zeal equally with those who betook themselves in arms to the tented field; and when the forces of Northumberland melted away like snow before the sun; when their ambitious leader sought by the most abject submission to avert his doom; when the Banbury warriors returned to their homes after having assisted in achieving a bloodless victory; the queen showed that she was not unmindful of those by whose aid she had succeeded in ascending the throne.

On the 21st of January, 1554, the first year of queen Mary's reign, she granted a charter of incorporation to the town of Banbury, by which it was raised to the dignity of a free corporate borough. This document prescribed that it was to be governed by a bailiff, twelve aldermen, and a like number of councillors, described therein as "capital burgesses," who were conjointly to form the body corporate, with authority to plead as such in courts of law, to have a common seal, and to acquire lands or other possessions. The bailiff—or, as we should now call him, the mayor—was to be elected annually by the corporation from among the twelve aldermen; and

vacancies which might, from time to time, arise among their number, were to be filled up by the votes of the aldermen alone from the ranks of the lower branch of the council. Such vacancies as might occur among the twelve burgesses, arising from promotion, expulsion, or death, were to be filled up by the votes of the whole council, from among the "discreet" inhabitants of the borough. It will thus be seen that the people at large had but little to do with the election or appointment of their civic rulers—the first chief magistrate and all the other members of the corporation having been specially appointed by the crown in the first instance, and authorised to fill up such vacancies as might occur among their number.

The bounds of the borough included the space within the gates, and were nearly co-extensive with the present limits. A serjeant-at-mace was to be appointed by the council, and constables and other officers to be chosen annually. A court of record was to be held every third Monday, before the high steward or his deputy, the chief magistrate, two aldermen, and a like number of common councillors, who were authorised to settle all actions or complaints, when the sum in dispute did not exceed five pounds.

A weekly market was to be held on Thursdays, and two fairs in the course of the year—one on the feast of Saint Peter and the other on the feast of Saint Luke—each of which was to last three days. During the continuance of these fairs, a court of "pied pouldre" was ordered to be held, the name of which was derived from the French, and signifying "dusty-foot" in allusion to the class of offenders whom it was intended to try. This court, the name of which gradually came to be

corrupted into "pie powder," consisted of the same members as the court of record, and was entrusted with power to repress such disturbances as might arise at the fairs, as well as summarily to punish with fine or imprisonment all who might then misconduct themselves within the compass of the borough bounds. The amount of such fines, together with the sums levied for "piccage and stallage," the charges for assaye of bread, wine, and ale, as well as the proceeds of all forfeitures, waifs, and strays, were ordered to be paid into the corporation treasury—the town council on its part promising to pay into the royal exchequer the sum of £6 13s. 4d. a year.

The charter next ordained that the bailiff, aldermen, and twelve burgesses of Banbury should be empowered to send a member to parliament, and for this purpose they were to nominate and elect "a discreet burgess of the said borough," who should have like privileges and powers in the house of commons as the members returned by other boroughs in the kingdom. This was sometimes regarded as the reverse of a favour, seeing that legislators had not then learned to pay for the honour, and were required to be maintained at the expence of the place for which they were returned. Thus many places -Deddington amongst the rest-memorialised the crown that they might be freed from the burden of sending members to the house of commons, although they would now jump at the chance. There is accordingly a strict injunction given in the charter, that the burgess thus elected was to be present whenever parliament should assemble, and there remain whilst the house should continue to hold its sittings, "at the burden and costs of the said borough and parish of Banbury." From this

it would appear that the doctrine broached in the people's charter, for the constituencies to pay their members, is not such a new-fangled notion as many people consider it; but that the principle at least was embodied in the first charter of incorporation that was granted to Banbury.

The corporation was empowered to hold law days twice a year, and levy a rate of "frankpledge" of all the inhabitants and residents in the borough. Bye-laws were also authorised to be enacted by the same body, not only for their own government, but for that of the inhabitants at large—provided that such bye-laws should not militate against the statutes of the realm.

Such then was the charter under which Banbury first took its place among the other corporate boroughs in the kingdom; and although the idea of a close corporation, like that of which we have sketched the outline, would now be scouted with contempt by all, yet in those days it was hailed with gladness, as a distinguished token of the sovereign's favour. In great state the newly-appointed members of council held their first court dinner, on which they spent the sum of £1 14s. in the purchase of candlemas geese, good fat capons, hares, rabbits, and haunches of venison. These they washed down with copious libations of humming home-brewed, and finished off with a "pottle" of sack.

Nor was the rejoicing confined to the members of the corporation; as a special performance was got up for the amusement of the populace, and one of those "mysteries of the middle ages," concerning which so much has been written, was brought out with unprecedented splendour as a sort of

general jubilee. The tradesmen of the town are represented as having liberally contributed to the expence; and in its gorgeous magnificence, the pageant provided on this occasion is stated to have far surpassed all previous exhibitions. It must, indeed, have been unique of its kind. Lads of the town and men from a distance, hired performers and supernumerary amateurs, were dressed up to personify the well-known characters of holy writ. The fabled gods of a motley heathen mythology were there represented—there too were impersonations of the heroes and heroines of a remote antiquity. There were Saint Catharines and Mary Magdalenes side by side with fawns and satyrs—Jupiter poising his thunderbolts and Judas betraying his Master-Apollo might have been seen hobnobbing with the "sweet singer of Israel"-Sampson and Hercules were side by side-Neptune had come up from the bed of the Cherwell to take juxta position with Alexander the Great.

On swept the gorgeous but incongruous procession, en route to the Bear Garden where the pageant was to be enacted. The horns were braying, the cymbals clashing, the drums thundering forth their loudest notes, and if the music was not of such a character as would have satisfied the fastidious taste of modern critics, it was sufficiently sonorous to awaken the slumbering echoes of Crouch hill, and to reverberate back from the wooded wilds of Warkworth. The flapping banners fluttered in the breeze, and waved more gaily still as, seated on a milk white charger, came the glittering representative of "Our lady Saint Mary." In the dazzling splendour of her robes, she far outshone the surrounding throng; and as the procession pauses by the great cross for the opening scene of the pageant—the

prologue, as it were, of the forthcoming drama—it is easy to learn the origin of the celebrated stanza, which has caused the name of this borough to become so familiar as a household word, in every clime where our language is spoken, or where the far-stretching dominions of our sovereign extend:

"Ride a cock-horse, to Banbury Cross!
To see a fine lady ride on a white horse!
Rings on her fingers, and bells on her toes,
She shall have music wherever she goes."

But not only did the newly-constituted authorities strive to amuse the well-disposed among the people; they also lost no time in taking the steps necessary to restrain the lawless. They erected a Town Hall in the Market Place, where the pillory had formerly stood, and here were held the Courts of Record and "Pie Powder," as well as the meetings of the aldermen and councillors. Close to this was an enormous wooden structure, brought from the castle, and so cumbrous was it, that it could not be taken out by the gate, but had to be heaved over the castle wall. In effecting this, a considerable portion of the rampart gave way, and had to be repaired at the cost of the borough. It may be interesting to know that the bill came to "four pence!" and that for carrying the timber of this erection, not inappropriately denominated "the cage," from the castle to the new hall, three men were paid six-pence a-piece, whilst Nicholas Sturgeon and John the carpenter received six-and-eight-pence for setting it up.

As the pillory had been taken down, some other mode of prompt punishment for culprits must be provided. A pair of moveable stocks were consequently constructed, in which trans-

gressors might be exposed to the public gaze, in different quarters of the now incorporated borough. But a still more effectual punishment was provided for those amiable ladies who were then, as they are still, irreverently termed "scolds," simply because they make a liberal use of those gifts which God has given them, and allow their tongues to outrun their discretion. The same simple and efficacious mode of punishment was resorted to in the case of fraudulent bakerswhose weights were unjust, or their bread adulterated-of brewers whose beer would not stand the test, or their measures would not hold the quantum—of pickpockets, thieves, and petty larcenists, always supposing that they were taken in the act. A small stream called the "Cuttle brook" flowed past the west and south fronts of the castle, turned the machinery of the Cuttle mill nigh where the Bear inn now stands, and fed a muddy pool at the lower end of the Market Place. By the side of this pond, the "cucking-stool" was placed, which, like the stool of repentance in the kirk of Scotland, was a seat rather to be shunned than courted. To this "easy chair" offenders were securely strapped; by means of a crane they were hoisted on high; at the pull of a cord, the seat came in pieces and was left dangling in the air; whilst the transgressor dropped full "squash" into the troubled waters. well be fancied that this would be as effectual a method of punishing fraudulent tradesmen as any amount of pecuniary penalty; nay, it may even be hinted that there are some few husbands so hard-hearted, as occasionally-when under extraordinary temptation—to wish that the pond was there still; but it must be borne in mind that this mode of punishment

was not without its inconveniences, as towards the close of the eighteenth century, a culprit died from an over-dose of the discipline, and the cucking-stool was forthwith abolished.

The next step taken by the members of the corporation was to exercise their new-born privilege of electors; so after looking about them, their choice fell upon Mr. Thomas Denton-a gentleman who had previously been sheriff of the counties of Oxford and Berks-who was accordingly returned as the first representative of Banbury in parliament. He sat for the borough in the second and third parliaments of queen Mary; but in the fourth, he was returned as member for the county, and in this session of the legislature there is no record of a return from Banbury. Indeed it is perfectly possible that no writ was issued to the borough for that parliament, seeing that its former representative was not to be moulded to the will of the government, and refused to become a mere tool in the hands of the executive. On the dissolution of the house, in the month of January, 1555, he was one of those committed to the Queen's Bench for "contumacy," in having refused to attend the meetings of the house of commons, when he found that its members were bent on the enactment of measures of which he disapproved. John Denton, the son of their former representative, was returned as member for the borough to the fifth parliament summoned by queen Mary, and he continued to represent it during the few remaining years of her reign.

The next topic for consideration will be the bye-laws that were enacted by the corporation in 1558, both for the guidance of the members of that body and for the government of their fellow-townsmen. It was therein commanded that if any

man should be lawfully elected to the office of chief magistrate and refuse to serve, he was to be committed to prison, without bail, until he had paid a fine of £20 to the borough funds; and if any man should refuse to act as alderman, common councillor, constable, or any other office in the borough, after having been duly elected, he was required to pay a penalty of forty shillings, and also to be incarcerated for two days.

On the mornings of "Ascension," "Corpus Christi," and of every fair, each alderman and councillor was required to array himself in his Sunday's garb, and present himself by eight o'clock at the house where the chief magistrate resided. they were to form in procession and accompany the high bailiff to the market cross, where the usual proclamation was directed to be made. They were then to return in the same order to the bailiff's house and were afterwards to be at liberty to mind their own business. At one o'clock, p.m., on the day of the feast of "St. Michael the Archangel," all the members of the corporation were again enjoined to repair to the residence of the chief magistrate, each arrayed in his "best apparel;" that they should accompany the high bailiff to the parish church; that they were there to kneel together in the presence of the Eucharist; that they were to offer up their joint prayers with the people, and to make common supplication to heaven's high KING.

It was also directed, that on the election of a new chief magistrate, the retiring high bailiff should hand the royal mace over to his successor, as the sign and and symbol of his deputed authority; that the person appointed to that office should not be at liberty to absent himself from the borough for a longer period than a week at a time, without having previously appointed a sufficient deputy, whose nomination should have met with the approval of the council. Whenever the members of the council should be engaged in municipal business, they were all to be arrayed in their gowns of office; and none of them was at any time to be at liberty to absent himself from the town for three weeks in succession, under a penalty of forty shillings, unless he had previously obtained leave of absence under the hand and seal of the chief magistrate.

The freedom of the town, and liberty to commence business therein, might be obtained either by apprenticeship or purchase. In the former case, the apprentice was to serve his master for the space of seven years, and at the expiry of that period, he was to pay a shilling to the corporation and fourpence to the town clerk. But if the freedom of the town was obtained by purchase, the candidate was required to pay twenty shillings to the corporation, a shilling to the town clerk, and a penny to the relief of the prisoners and the poor. By way of ridiculing the very limited privileges conferred by the freedom of this borough, when compared with those enjoyed by persons of the same class resident elsewhere, it came to be a byeword, that when a freeman of Banbury found three pigs lying together in the street, he was at liberty to rouse the middle one and lie down in his place. Whoever originated the joke deserved the pillory, for there is no mention of this privilege made in the bye-laws.

Two wardens were to be appointed from every trade, who were authorised to make rules for the guidance of those ordinarily engaged in that particular calling, provided that such

regulations were neither prejudicial to the interests of the corporation, nor at variance with the laws of the land. But before any such rules should be binding on the trade, they must be approved of by the chief magistrate and court of aldermen. Provided that speedy justice could be obtained in the local courts of law, no inhabitant was to be at liberty to enter an action against another in any tribunal out of the borough, under a penalty of one day's imprisonment and payment of a fine of twenty shillings. In conclusion, all the inhabitants were ordered to be obedient to those in authority, and to comply with every requirement of the high bailiff and justices of the peace; or, for any act of disobedience, the penalty was two days' imprisonment and loss of freedom.

Whilst Banbury was thus occupied with the regulation and settlement of its municipal affairs, the whole kingdom was convulsed from one end to the other. The queen had espoused Don Philip of Spain and had re-established the Roman Catholic religion. Both houses of parliament had voted an address to the king and queen, professing to acknowledge that they had been guilty of a great crime in having departed from the faith of their fathers, beseeching their majesties to intercede in their behalf and to make their peace with the papal see. Pope Julius III. was no inexorable prelate, and gladly received his erring flock back into the bosom of the Roman fold. confiscated estates were never restored; for those who had reaped the greatest share of the plunder took good care to have repeated assurances both from the pope and the queen, that the ecclesiastical property should never be enquired into, and that the whole of the church and abbey lands should remain in

the hands of their then possessors. Thus it was, that although the creed of the Roman Catholic church was again the established religion of the land; yet in the loss of its princely revenues, its splendour was gone; shorn of their wealth, the temporal powers of its priesthood had departed for ever.

For some time, the queen's health had been in a very critical condition, her malady having been mistaken by her physicians for a state to which it bore a kindred appearance, and improper remedies having been applied, she was borne to the tomb in 1558, after a reign of five years and four months.

CHAPTER VIII.

The Reign of Queen Elizabeth.

Return to Protestantism.—A new Code of Local Laws.—The Queen Excommunicated.—Murder of a Drayton Farmer.—Anthony Pope, Esq. M.P.—Richard Fiennes, Esq. Broughton.—Public Transactions from 1585 to 1595.—How the Vicar was treated.—Banbury Castle leased to the Family of Broughton.—Patents and Monopolies.—Demolition of Banbury Cross.

NE of the first steps taken by queen Elizabeth was to secure the ascendancy of the principles of the Reformation; but with a view to quiet the fears of her Roman Catholic subjects, she retained the services of eleven members of the previous administration, adding however eight others to them, whose principles were more in accordance with her own. She recalled those friends of protestantism who had been exiled from their country on account of their religious opinions,

and set the captives at liberty who were imprisoned for conscience sake. These and other indications of her intentions so alarmed the bishops that they refused to assist at the coronation; and it was not without difficulty that his right reverend lordship of Carlisle was at last prevailed on to officiate at the ceremony.

A parliament was summoned; and to show how they managed matters in those days, it may be as well to state what sort of freedom of choice was allowed to the electors. Five candidates were nominated by the ministry for boroughs, and three for counties; from these, the few who were entrusted with the privilege of selection were permitted to make choice, and the sheriff or other returning officer was allowed to notify the election of none other than one of those thus permitted to be put in nomination. The famous Sir Francis Walsingham, afterwards one of Elizabeth's most favoured ministers, was recommended by lord Burleigh as one of the candidates for Banbury, and on him the choice of the corporation fell. In this parliament, newly-erected monasteries were suppressed, and the queen declared "governess" of the church; the statutes enacted in king Edward's reign, which had been repealed in that of Mary were again confirmed; bishops and incumbents were forbidden to alienate their revenues; whoever should deny the queen's supremacy, for the first offence was to forfeit both land and goods, for the second denial was to be subject to the penalty of a praemunire, and for the third transgression was to be adjudged guilty of high treason.

In aiding the protestants of France, Elizabeth had emptied her own exchequer, and in 1563, a parliament was summoned for the purpose of recruiting her exhausted finances. Sir Francis Walsingham was again returned for Banbury, but as he was also elected for Lyme Regis in Dorset, in the neighbourhood of which town he had considerable property, he made choice of the latter seat, and the borough was represented by Mr. Owen Brereton.

On the 24th of April, 1564, a "great inquest" was held on the queen's behalf in this locality, and the following precepts were ordered to be enforced: -All shops and shop windows, used for the purpose of buying or selling, were to be closed on. festivals and on the sabbath day-whilst each man and woman was strictly enjoined to attend divine service in the parish church. All who should transgress this order, whether by opening their shops for trade purposes, by following their daily occupations at home, or by neglecting to attend the parish church, without a good and valid excuse, were for every such offence to pay the sum of three shillings and fourpence; and licensed victuallers were prohibited from serving their customers, during the hours of divine service, under a like penalty. One half of these fines was to be appropriated to the funds of the corporation, and the remaining portion devoted to the relief of the poor.

No person whatever was to receive any inmate or sub-tenant into his house, without having first obtained the sanction of the high bailiff and justices of the peace, under a penalty of six-and-eightpence in money and two days' imprisonment. If such inmate, or sub-tenant, should be allowed to remain for twelve days, without the requisite permission, the offender was ordered to pay a fine of forty shillings, and also to forfeit his

freedom of the town. There is every reason to believe that this stringent enactment was mainly directed against the professors of the Roman Catholic religion, for the purpose of preventing them from receiving into their houses any of the wandering clergy appertaining to their faith, who appear to have been regarded with strong suspicion by the authorities constituted under the new regime.

There were several regulations for cleansing the streets, but every man was ordered to find his own scavenger; and those resident in the principal thoroughfares were directed to clean in front of their dwellings every quarter of a year, under a penalty of three shillings and fourpence for each neglect. For those dwelling in Mill Lane and Scalding-lane-the latter of which is now known as Fish Street-once a year was considered sufficient, and twenty-pence was the penalty for noncompliance. The slaughter-houses of the butchers were ordered to be washed out once a week. The Cuttle brook from North Bar to Cornhill was to be cleansed out annually, at the expence of the owners of the adjoining property; and thence by the Market Place, along the Cow fair to the east end of Bridge street, by those who dwelt on the north side of the way. No person was to be at liberty to sweep their gutters into the channel of the brook in question, throw filth therein, set their "honey barrels" or other vessel to soak in its waters, or allow their ducks or geese to paddle in the stream. The brook was not to diverted from its proper channel without the consent of the court leet, under a penalty of six-and-eightpence. No sheepskins were to be laid to soak in the Cherwell, within twenty feet of the bridge, and no carrion was to be deposited, nor water-closet emptied, on the Goose leys nigh the bridge-end. Four places were pointed out for depositing scrapings and manure-one in North Bar street, one in South Bar street, a third in Broad street, which was then called the Coal Bar, and the fourth was to be twelve feet from the highway, nigh the house of William Perkins, wherever that interesting domicile might happen to have been situated. One of the most singular regulations of what we cannot help regarding as a somewhat eccentric age, was that no person was to be allowed to carry manure from the town except between the 1st of May and the festival of St. Michael the archangel. No doubt many of these enactments were to be attributed to the appearance of the plague in England, which had been brought over to this country by the army of the earl of Warwick, who in consequence of its devastations, had been compelled to surrender the city of Havre to the French. This formidable irruption of the dreaded pestilence swept away great numbers of the people, and in London alone, in the course of a single year, twenty thousand persons are reported to have died. The Rev. Thomas Bracebridge, who was at this time vicar of Banbury, speaks of it as a sharp rod wherewith the Almighty chastises his erring sons, and one which he had often seen whisked about his own ears, but happily without its having fallen on his shoulders.

The "farmer of the parsonage" was ordered to maintain a proper fence around the churchyard, to keep out swine and other "undecent cattle," on pain of forty shillings for every three weeks' neglect. No grunters were to be permitted to wander about the streets without a ring in their snouts; whilst

on market days, they were to be confined to the pig-stye, as it was especially ordered, that "no hogs should go abroad within the Market Place, or in any street where a market is held, upon the market day, ringed or unringed."

The landlords of public houses were allowed some special and rather singular privileges, for no person excepting inn-keepers or licensed victuallers was to be allowed to purchase eggs and again offer them for sale, either wholesale or retail, under a penalty of six-and-eightpence for every offence. But they were also subject to stringent regulations; for no inn-keeper was to allow any journeyman, servant, apprentice, or child, to play at any unlawful game in his house, under a like penalty, and furthermore to be imprisoned for two days. All common brewers were enjoined to make their ale "good and wholesome for man's body," and not to send it out to their customers until it had received the approbation of the "tasters," or the person so offending was to forfeit a similar pecuniary penalty.

There were other regulations relative to the rental paid by the occupants of sheep pens, which was to be a penny on market days and fourpence at the great fairs for every full-sized pen; to the places appointed for the sale of fish and fruit; to the prohibition of journeymen from keeping stalls in the markets or fairs, except in a specified locality, unless they had previously taken up their freedom, in which case they were at liberty to erect their stall in any unoccupied part of the ground. Prostitutes were forbidden to walk the streets, butchers and chandlers were enjoined not to exceed the price fixed by the chief magistrate for tallow and candles, and those who began

a fray were ordered to be locked up until they had paid a fine of three-and-fourpence; but if blood had been drawn, the penalty was to be doubled and the weapon forfeited. For the safety of the inhabitants from fire, it was ordered that no corn rick, faggot stack, furze hovel, or similar inflammable erection, was to be raised within the bounds of the borough, except in such places as the high bailiff and magistrates should point out.

Such were the leading enactments resolved on at the "great inquest," and they are so far interesting as they are calculated to give us an insight into the manners of the age. The reader must, however, leave them for a time, in order to take a glance at affairs in general. Shortly after his elevation to the pontifical dignity, pope Pius V. warmly espoused the cause of the beauteous but unfortunate Mary queen of Scots, who was at that time a prisoner in England. On the refusal of Elizabeth to comply with his demands, he issued a bill by which she was declared to be excommunicated, her claim to the throne pronounced null and void, and all her subjects absolved from their vows of allegiance. As a counterpoise to this ecclesiastical thunder, she summoned a parliament to meet her at Westminister, to which Mr. Anthony Cope, of Hanwell, Hardwick, and Grimsbury, was returned as representative for the borough of Banbury. He was a thorough-going puritan, and in the efforts which that party so strenuously made for a further reformation in matters of religion, he zealously cooperated with his coadjutors. On the other hand, Elizabeth and her ministers contended that as she was supreme head of the church, she alone had the right of deciding in all matters of doctrine, discipline, and worship. A reformer named Strickland laid a measure before the house of commons for the amendment of the liturgy—a step which so irritated the queen that she summoned him before the council, and prohibited him from again appearing in parliament. But such a stretch of the royal prerogative was rather too arbitrary to be put up with in silence, even by the submissive representatives of those days; and finding that it was likely to cause a much greater ferment than she expected it would, Elizabeth sent him word that she had removed the prohibition, and that he might return to his seat in the house. This parliament met on the second of April, 1571, and was dissolved on the twenty-ninth of the following May.

A decree of the court of Chancery, made on the twenty-eighth day of November in the same year, ordered that the sum of £10 8s. should be paid annually to the high bailiff, aldermen, and burgesses of this borough, by the receiver of her majesty's revenues in Oxfordshire, to be applied to the relief of twelve poor men and women; and a further sum of £6 6s. 8d. for "an assistant to serve the cure in Banbury." These sums were directed to be paid quarterly, on particular festivals named in the decree.

It was at this period also, that the inhabitants of the district were horrified by the discovery of a double murder—committed by a criminal of high rank—one of the victims being his tenant and the other his tool. For a length of time, the Grevilles of Drayton had enjoyed all the honours that wealth can confer, and Ludovic Greville was now the unworthy representative of that far-descended race. He had large estates in the counties of Oxford, Gloucester, and Warwick;

but in consequence of his indulgence in extravagant habits, his pecuniary liabilities became heavier than he could meet. To extricate himself from this unpleasant dilemma, he planned a crime as diabolical in its nature as it was prompt in its execution. A wealthy old bachelor was his Drayton tenant, and he was invited over to the mansion in Gloucestershire, to partake of his landlord's hospitality, and to share in an approaching season of festivity. Grateful for such a mark of unwonted condescension, and wholly unsuspicious of impending danger, the victim readily fell into the snare. On his arrival, he was in all respects treated as a highly-favoured guest, shown over the mansion, and his opinion asked relative to certain projected alterations. After dinner, he was freely plied with the best in the cellar, and reelled off to his bed-room in an advanced stage of inebriety. The dark hour approaches, when Murder rouses himself from his day-slumbers, shakes his grizzled locks, and stalks forth into the world on his errand of blood. The forms of two ruffians in Greville's employ may be seen stealthily creeping to the chamber where the farmer sleeps—the end of a cord is quietly introduced under his neck -a single "hitch" is dexterously formed—a strong man pulls at each end of the rope—there is the struggle of a minute and all is over.

The body having been disposed of, one of the murderers was instructed to personate the Drayton farmer. He got into the bed where the foul deed had been so recently consummated, and pretended to be taken suddenly and dangerously ill. A notary was sent for; and under the apparently dying man's instructions, he draws up a will bequeathing the great bulk

of the pseudo-testator's property to Ludovic Greville his much esteemed landlord and friend. Shortly afterwards, it was given out that the farmer was dead, and by virtue of the fabricated document, the guilty Greville enters on possession. But the justice of an avenging heaven rarely sleeps. His Gloucestershire mansion has now no charms for the murderer, and he hies him to his estates in Warwickshire. Whilst in Stratford-upon-Avon, one of his tools attempted to drown the horrors of his remorse in the wine cup, and whilst in a state of intoxication, he let fall some words of fearful import. These reached the ears of his master, who resolved on the instant that he too should be silenced for ever. Giving the other his clue, he sent them both on a pretended errand; and whilst on their way, he who had given so great a licence to his tongue was stabbed to the heart by his accomplice in crime, and his body thrown into a deep pit. The discovery of the corpse led to an investigation, whereby the guilt of the murderer was clearly brought home to him, and he in turn revealed the foul iniquity of his employer. Ludovic Greville was accordingly put upon his trial at Warwick, when in order to save his estates from confiscation, he refused to plead to the charge, and in accordance with a barbarous law, he was doomed to be crushed to death.

Parliament was again summoned in 1576, and Mr. Anthony Cope was for the second time returned. In this session, he strenuously supported Mr. Wentworth, who, by his fearless advocacy of the independence of the house of commons, gave mortal offence to Elizabeth and her ministers. He urged that as parliament was the properly-constituted guardian and

exponent of the laws, its members should have full liberty to discharge the sacred trust confided to their hands. mitted that as sovereigns could only become kings or queens by law, they were bound to follow the course which the laws should prescribe, even though it should be at variance with These doctrines were, as a matter of course, their own will. exceedingly unpalateable in high places, and Wentworth was brought up before the star chamber—a fitting tribunal for tyranny to work its pleasure with its victims. But even in that arbitrary court, Wentworth would neither apologise nor recant; and after he had been in the custody of the sergeantat-arms for a month, he was restored to his liberty and to his seat in the house. However much puritanism may be decried -and in Banbury it seems early to have taken a firm roothowever much its assertors or abettors may be held up to ridicule—yet it is beyond a doubt that this country is more deeply indebted to the stubborn puritans of early times, for the liberties we now enjoy, than the detractors of these patriots are willing to acknowledge.

In 1581, a new parliament was summoned, and the name of Mr. Cope is again recorded in its rolls. This session is chiefly remarkable for the severity of its enactments against the ancient faith. One specimen may suffice for many: Whoever reconciled another to the church of Rome, or was himself reconciled thereto, was declared guilty of treason. So much for liberty of conscience and the spirit of toleration as practised in "the golden days of good queen Bess."

In a short session of parliament held in 1585, Richard Fiennes, Esq. of Broughton, the descendant of lord Saye who was beheaded in Cheapside, was returned the representative for Banbury. In 1586, hostilities commenced with Spain, in which Sir Francis Drake obtained considerable advantages over the naval resources of that power, both in the West Indies and in the bay of Cadiz. On the 7th of February, 1587, Mary queen of Scots was beheaded at Fotheringay, in the adjoining county of Northampton, and the heroism with which she met her death may be regarded as some atonement for the errors of her life. In 1588, England was invaded by the Spanish armada, consisting of a hundred and thirty vessels. manned by 8,450 sailors—exclusive of 2,000 galley slaves having on board an army of 19,300 soldiers, and 2,600 brass cannon. The English admiral conducted himself with great bravery, and actually pursued this formidable armament to the very harbour of Calais, crippling or capturing all the stragglers he could come up with, but without engaging in a general Eventually, the bravery of English seamen, aided materially by the tempests of the deep, so shattered this mighty naval host, that one half of those who sailed forth so proudly from the coast of Spain never returned to their country to tell how they had fared.

Parliaments were summoned in 1586, 1588, and 1592, to which Mr. Cope of Hanwell, was again returned as member for Banbury, and in which the queen and her faithful commons were ever disputing about questions of prerogative—her majesty strenuously asserting her right to the unquestioned exercise of arbitrary power; and the representatives of the people occasionally—although it might be rarely

[&]quot;With bated breath and whispering humbleness"— L. of C.

venturing to say a word or two in defence of the privileges of parliament and of the rights of the nation. In all these discussions, the members for the borough stuck stoutly out for the liberty of the subject, for freedom of discussion, and for all the privileges of an independent legislature.

A passing allusion has already been made to the Rev. Thomas Bracebridge, who for some years previously had been vicar of Banbury. He appears to have been an eminent and learned divine, the author of many classical and theological works; but in consequence of his attachment to the principles of the early puritans, he had been suspended from the functions and emcluments of his office, through the instrumentality of the bishop of the diocese. The townsmen warmly espoused their pastor's cause; and a memorial bearing the date of June 16th, 1590, signed by ninety-five of the principal inhabitants, was presented to lord Burleigh praying that nobleman to use his influence in restoring their clergyman to his place among them. They urged on the attention of the lord treasurer and privy council, that Mr. Bracebridge had been deprived of his small living, in consequence of charges having been preferred against him, relating simply to "some matters of ceremonies," and that they had been so preferred by enemies of whose violence and wrong the whole country had heard. This memorial was backed by a petition from the deposed clergyman himself, in which he alludes to the fact of his being well known to Sir William Knollys, controller of her majesty's household. requested—if he could not again be inducted into his living that at all events he might be allowed to preach; for his parishioners had expressed a determination to maintain him,

whether he preached or not. As he that did not labour was not worthy of his maintenance, so he wished to give his people some recompence for their kindness. He promised, in the event of his request being complied with, that he would abstain from all controversial matters, except such as were condemned by lawful authority, and would endeavour, by all means, to live in peace and amity with his clerical brethren. Whether or not the conjoint application was successful, there is no record extant to show; but Mr. Bracebridge was consigned to his last resting-place in the church-yard, in 1593, in the 57th year of his age.

In 1595, the castle of Banbury and all its appurtenances, together with the castle orchard and the property belonging to the manor, which had been held aforetime by the bishops of Lincoln, were leased to William, Ursula, and Elizabeth Fiennes, the son and two daughters of Sir Richard Fiennes, owner of the barony of Broughton and manor of Shutford. The revenues arising from all courts leet and courts of the hundred, all waifs and strays, all goods and chattels of felons and fugitives, all the royal rents in Calthorpe, Neithrop, Swalcliffe, Shutford, Williamscote, Claydon, and several other villages, were in like manner leased to the same members of the Fiennes family, who, in return for these possessions and privileges, were on their part to pay into the royal exchequer the sum of £5 18s, a year. The fines arising from the courts of record and assize appear to have been the only property retained by the crown.

The last parliament of queen Elizabeth was summoned to meet at Westminster on the 27th of October, 1601, and Sir

Anthony Cope, for he was now knighted, was again entrusted with the duties of local representative. At this time patents and monopolies were exceedingly oppressive; and for want of wholesome competition, many of the necessaries of life were so extravagantly high in price, that great dissatisfaction was experienced. The trade in all the leading branches of commerce was confined to those who had received a patent from the queen to deal in the article; and the price of salt, for example, had been raised from sixteen pence to fifteen shillings a bushel. The independent members in the house, Sir Anthony Cope amongst the number, strenuously set their faces against these monstrous exactions; and the queen, although not without reluctance, consented to cancel the most oppressive of the monopolies, and throw the trade open to competition. What would be thought in our day of sentiments like the following, handed down as having been uttered by a high legal functionary? The occasion was on the motion for granting a subsidy to the crown, and Mr. Serjeant Heyle is the immortal orator: "I marvel much that the house should hesitate in granting a subsidy, or in the time of payment, when all we have is her majesty's, and she may lawfully at her pleasure take it from us; yea, she has as much right to all our lands and goods as to any revenue of her crown." Opinions like these were hardly in unison with the sentiments entertained by the patriotic member for Banbury, whose name is consequently recorded among the leaders of the opposition.

The close of the long reign of "the maiden queen" was signalised in Banbury by one of those acts of Vandalism into which the zeal of the puritans occasionally hurried them, and

which were consummated by the populace from the mere love of mischief. Notwithstanding acts of parliament to the contrary, there were still many Roman catholics in the town and neighbourhood-a circumstance to which Mr. Bracebridge refers in the petition which he forwarded to the lord treasurer. He states that "preaching is especially necessary here, because many recusants sojourn hard by the town; who notwithstanding their close keeping, may do much harm to the parishioners if papistry be not diligently laboured against, whereunto many of the inhabitants are too much inclined." Thus it seems that all the penal enactments of the legislature, for the suppression of the ancient faith, were wholly inadequate for that end-another proof, if testimony were needed, that persecution can never bring conviction to the mind, and that in all ages and for every creed, "the blood of the martyrs has been the seed of the church."

From the date of the execution of the earl of Essex, the last and best-beloved favourite of the queen—an event which took place in 1601—the active mind of Elizabeth became seriously impaired, and the transaction of public business was disagreeable and irksome. The oppressed and consequently dissatisfied adherents of the church of Rome, taking advantage of this altered state of things, began to wax bolder in the expression of their opinions. Under the strict rule of the puritans, the shows and pageants had been suppressed, and an attempt was now made by the catholics to revive them. The dresses were procured, the characters rehearsed, and a day fixed for the performance in Banbury. The procession of the performers had reached the high cross, and they were engaged

in the prologue of the play, when a counter-demonstration issued from the High street, and a collision ensued between the excited partisans of the conflicting creeds. A regular mellee is described as taking place; but the supporters of the reformed doctrines, having both numbers and the law upon their side, seem eventually to have had the best of the fray. Having succeeded in driving their antagonists out of the town, the rage of the populace took a new direction. Hammers and pick-axes were procured, and the "goodly cross," the symbol of the faith of the Roman catholic world, surrounded as it was by many steps, was strewed in ruins through the horse fair. Of its shape, we have no authenticated record; but there is little doubt that it was of the usual cruciform construction. There were at least three other "crosses" in the town—that in the market place, the white cross at the far end of West street, and the bread cross in what is now called Broad street, but in consequence of its having been the place appointed for the sale of charcoal, was then denominated the coal bar. All these were more or less injured and some of them entirely destroyed—as if the senseless memorials of a by-gone age could affect the theology of the passing hour. So thorough was the work of destruction, that a writer of the time compares the state in which the crosses were left, to the stumps of trees when the the trunks are cut down, or to the conveniences by a road-side inn intended to aid a lazy horseman in mounting to the saddle.

Nor did the deeds of demolition end here; for the cry was raised, "to the church!" "to the church!" and to the church the crowd accordingly repaired, and worked their frantic will

upon the stately temple. The magnificent windows of stained glass were shivered to atoms, as savouring too strongly of idolatry, and the statuary and sculpture mutilated and defaced by the hands of those insensible to forms of beauty. To such an extent was the devastation carried, that the writer to whom we have referred charges the rioters with not having left the the leg or arm of an apostle, and says that the names of the churchwardens were the only inscription to be seen upon the walls. A puritanic official seems to have completed by night what the crowd begun by day; for he then visited the house of prayer in the company of a friend and threw down the statues which the mob had spared.

The death of Elizabeth occurred on the 24th of March, 1603, and it may be said of her that her courage was exempt from rashness, and her active mind from a vain ambition. But the rivalry of beauty she could not brook; her desire of of admiration was boundless and insatiable; jealousy often planted in her bosom its keenest sting; her temper was oft shaken by the roughest sallies of anger, and gusts of passion not unfrequently caused the boldest to quake in her presence.



CHAPTER IX.

The Reign of James E.

Titles and Rank.—The King's first Parliament.—Survey of Banbury.—The New Charter.—Privilege versus Prerogative.—Local Baronets and what the Honour cost.—Ladies imprisoned in Banbury Castle.—Lazy Workmen set in the Stocks.—Death of Sir Anthony Cope.—Banbury satirised for its zeal in Theology.—The Borough Armoury.—Sir Erasmus Dryden.—Death of the King.

O dispute occurred concerning the succession to the crown, and James VI. of Scotland, great-grandson of the eldest sister of Henry VIII. peacefully ascended the throne of England as James I. One of the first acts of this erudite but egotistic monarch, after his accession, was to revive the dormant honours of the house of Broughton, which had remained in abeyance since the battle of Barnet. Sir Richard Fiennes was called to the upper house by the old family title of lord Saye and Sele, and is represented as having been in all respects worthy of the honour. Sir Anthony Cope of Hanwell, who had been knighted by Elizabeth in 1590, was appointed high sheriff of the county, and his son William, who lived at Hardwick, received the honour of knighthood at the king's hand. Titles were now lavishly bestowed, for in the same year, 1603, Sir William Knollys, afterwards earl of Banbury, was raised to the peerage as baron Knollys of the Greys. In the course of the first six weeks after his accession, the accommodating king knighted no fewer than two hundred and thirty gentlemen, and among the number, Mr. John Pope of Wroxton received the accolade of a knight of the Bath.

In the first parliament held during this reign, which met on the 19th of March, 1604, Sir William Cope was chosen representative for Banbury, his father Anthony having retired. The principles of liberty were now better understood than had been the case in the reigns of the Plantagenets or Tudors, and the representatives of the people also began to be in earnest in the assertion of popular rights. Printing had been introduced into the country for an hundred and thirty years, and its first-fruits were now found ready for the gathering. James claimed to be an absolute king; but he had neither the firmness of purpose nor the decision of character requisite to enforce or support such a claim. He had no standing army whatever, a militia being in those days the sole military force in the kingdom. The power of the middle classes was rapidly on the increase—that of the nobility as certainly on the wane. Vassalage and serfdom had gone out of use, and men had ceased to be bought and sold with the land they tilled. The king looked upon the house of commons as a mere committee of supply; but the members regarded legislation as their province. They asserted their privileges as a legislative body; they refused to vote the supplies for the crown, and were accordingly prorogued on the 7th of July.

The gunpowder conspiracy and its detection, at the commencement of the ensuing session, appear to have somewhat mollified the stubborn commons, who granted his majesty three subsidies and six fifteenths, payable in the course of the

next four years. By a survey of Banbury in 1606, it appears that lord Saye and Sele was in possession of a considerable amount of property in the town, including the castle and adjoining orchard, the lordship of the hundred, the court leet and view of frankpledge, together with the rectory, tithe, and glebe-land. The corporation is reported as possessing nine houses in different parts of the town, sixteen cottages, eleven other tenements, the cuttle mill on the site now occupied by the Bear inn, besides garden and other ground both cultivated and waste. Mr. Henry Hawten is set down as a leaseholder of a good deal of property about Crouch, Easingdon, and the manor of Calthorpe. Besides these, there are enumerated in the report of the survey upwards of seventy "free tenants," and sundry other shops and dwelling-houses held under letters patent.

In 1608, lord Knollys of the Greys was chosen high steward of Banbury, and through his lordship's influence at court, another charter of incorporation was granted to the borough. By this it was provided, that in addition to the chief magistrate who was now to be called, the mayor, the twelve aldermen and six chief burgesses, there were to be thirty "assistants" chosen from among the inhabitants, who were each to have a vote in the election of the mayor, and who were to aid him with their counsel whensoever requisite. Vacancies were to be filled up as heretofore; and the members of the corporation, who were elected for life, were empowered to choose a high steward of the borough, a recorder, a chamberlain, and a town clerk. Justices of the peace were appointed, and their powers which were extensive defined at

A gaol was to be erected for the safe keeping of length. transgressors, and a gallows constructed for the execution of criminals who should be found guilty of "felonies, murders, or other misdemeanours" committed within the compass of the borough bounds. The previous courts of record and "pie powder" were confirmed, at the former of which debts might now be recovered to the amount of £40. Two sergeants-atmace were to be appointed, whose duty would be to serve all legal processes, and to carry the gilded and silvered maces in front of the mayor and corporation on occasions of state. The members of council, and all freemen of the borough, were exempted from serving upon county juries. A weekly wool market was established for the purpose of contributing to the sources of labour, and all freemen were empowered to buy and sell. The "king's hospital" was to be founded for the relief of twenty-four poor men and women, who might be disabled from earning their living; the hospital in question to be under the government of a guardian and three trustees, who were to form a corporate body, authorised to hold land to the yearly value of £40, the proceeds to be devoted to the purposes of the hospital.

In 1610, the first parliament of king James was dissolved, in nearly every session of which there had been a serious and still-deepening controversy between the house of commons and the crown, the former contending for the confirmation and extension of their growing privileges, and the latter sticking out as stoutly for prerogatives and pay. James used to say, he would not be content that his power should be disputed; but that he would be ever willing for the reason

of his doing to appear, and to rule his actions according to his own laws. In the matter of cash, the house was both penurious and obstinate; but his majesty found out a ready. although it must be confessed a temporary method of raising those supplies which his people with-held. For ages previous, the honour of knighthood had been a mark of distinction conferred by sovereigns on their subjects; but hereditary knighthood was a thing unknown. The king, however, resolved on its establishment, and those knights who were desirous of the honour, and willing to pay for it, were raised to the dignity of baronets-an order established in 1611-in which year Sir Anthony Cope of Hanwell and Sir Thomas Pope of Wroxton were both elevated to the new dignity. Two hundred baronets were created in all, and as the average amount paid by each of them for the title was somewhere about a thousand pounds, it proved no bad windfall to the needy monarch.

Notwithstanding the severe and long-continued persecutions to which the professors of the Roman catholic religion had been subject, in consequence of adhering to their secret convictions, there were still many persons in the neighbourhood of that way of thinking, and neither rank nor sex formed a sufficient protection against the intolerant spirit of the age. By order of the privy council, transmitted to Sir Anthony Cope in 1612, he caused lady Stonor and several other ladies of rank to be apprehended on the charge of being suspected recusants, and consigned them to Banbury castle. Lord Saye's tenant by no means approved of being thus summarily ejected from his stronghold, in order to make room for the ladies and

their guards, and very naturally appealed to his landlord. On referring to the instrument that had been granted to him seventeen years previously, his lordship found that the property in question had been absolutely and unconditionally leased to his family for three lives, and that he was bound both to pay rent and keep the castle in repair. He remonstrated with Sir Anthony, to whom he pointed out the injustice of removing the occupant to whom the premises were let; but the orders of the council admitted of no discretion, so the tenant was necessitated to turn out, under the promise of being remunerated for his sudden removal. What recompence was given him, or how long the ladies were detained in custody, has not been exactly ascertained; but it is by no means improbable that some of them were imprisoned until 1622, when in order to get into the good graces of the king of Spain, James gave orders that all recusants should be liberated.

In the month of October, 1612, two enactments were resolved on by the corporation, which would sound rather strangely in modern times. They were adopted for the purpose of regulating labour and preventing idleness. Every day-labourer who should be out of employment was commanded to go to the leather-hall at six o'clock in the morning on every week-day, and there remain for one hour at least, unless he should previously have met with a job; and if he was found idle in the course of the day, without having taken this step for the purpose of procuring employment, he was to be set in the stocks for two hours. The other bye-law ordered that no handicrafts-man or artizan was to go to day-labour, or to work at any other trade than his own, provided that he

could obtain employment at the latter, under a like period of punishment in the stocks. The leather-hall, where the labourers were ordered to assemble, was a building fronting High street on one side, and Butcher Row on the other, and immediately to the eastward of the present publishing office of the *Banbury Advertiser*.

A parliament was summoned to meet on the fifth of April, 1614, and the now venerable Sir Anthony Pope was induced to leave the privacy of his retirement at Hanwell, to engage once more in the stormy arena of party politics. He was returned as member for Oxfordshire, his son Sir William being at the same time representative for Banbury. But this house of commons was not one whit more docile than that which preceded it, and was dissolved in the following June. The decease of Sir Anthony occurred shortly afterwards, forty-three years subsequent to the date when he was first returned as member for Banbury; and during the whole of this period, although not always its representative, he kept up an unbroken connection with the borough. He was buried at Hanwell where the sculptured marble transmits his memory, and where his funeral sermon was preached by Dr. Harris, whom he had formerly presented to the living. Notwithstanding that Sir Anthony was the consistent opponent of the court party in parliament, and the unflinching advocate of liberty, yet by the probity of his conduct and the moderation of his sentiments, he gained the esteem and respect of all—for Elizabeth conferred on him the honour of knighthood, and king James not only created him a baronet, but twice visited him at Hanwell with his queen and court.





The reputed sanctity of manners among the puritans of Banbury now drew upon the town the cutting sarcasms of the wits of the age. The "rare Ben Johnson," in his comedy of Bartholomew Fair, represents one of his characters—Zeal-of-the-Land Busy—a Banbury baker, who had abandoned the dough-tub and oven, for the more lucrative avocation of "seeing visions and dreaming dreams." Braithwaite, too, in his "Drunken Barnaby's Four Journeys," refers to the town in the following strain:—

"To Banbury came I, O profane one! There I saw a Puritane-one Hanging of his cat on Monday, For killing of a mouse on Sunday."

The same writer, in his "Strappado for the Devil," calls Bradford in Yorkshire the "Banbury of the North," and says that it also is famous for its "twanging ale, zeal, cakes, and cheese." Richard Corbet, subsequently bishop of Oxford, in his *Iter Boreale*, thus refers to the walks in and about the church:—

"If not for God's, for Mr. Whateley's sake, Level the walks; suppose these pitfalls make Him sprain a lecture, or displace a joint In his long prayer, or in his fifteenth point."

Notwithstanding the prevalence of puritanic principles in 1615, the very era when these wags were writing, the borough was able to boast of its armourer and armoury—the former being paid the salary of £1 per annum, and the latter containing four muskets and three corslets, with their furnishings complete, so that the town could arm and equip at least three "heavies" and a sharp-shooter. In 1619, the incorporated

trades of the borough consisted of the blacksmiths, glovers, mercers, drapers, shoemakers, and bakers, each of whom paid a small sum yearly towards the corporation funds, the total amounting to £2 8s. 4d.

Parliament was again summoned to assemble in the month of June, 1621, and Sir William Cope, bart. was returned once more as member for Banbury. Some five or six years previous to this period, that gentleman had rather a narrow escape from being raised to the peerage; and it was only in consequence of his unwillingness to pay the large sum of £10,000, which was then the price of being dubbed "my lord," that the coveted honour was conferred upon Sir Philip Stanhope, who appears to have been less chary in parting with his cash. The parliament voted two subsidies to the king; but after a protracted sitting of six months, the members took it into their heads to enquire into grievances, which James regarded as an awful infringement on the royal prerogative, and accordingly prorogued the session. The house reassembled after a short recess; but no better understanding seems to have been arrived at than before they broke up, the king on the one hand stretching wide the royal prerogative, and the commons on the other entering a solemn protestation in the journals of the house, firmly claiming their right to freedom of speech, and maintaining that the liberty of the subject and the privileges of parliament were the undoubted birthright and inheritance of the people. James was so enraged that he tore the protest from the journals with his own hand, and almost immediately afterwards dissolved the house.

In 1623, a pestilential visitation swept across the country,

carrying off many of the inhabitants. Banbury did not wholly escape its ravages; but the mortality was by no means so alarming in amount as it had been on previous occasions. In 1624, lord Save and Sele was created a viscount, and another general election took place, when Sir Erasmus Dryden of Cannon's Ashby, nearly related to the Cope family, and grandfather of the eminent poet of the name, was returned as Banbury's representative. Parliament sat from the 19th of February to the 29th of May. In the early part of 1625, the king was attacked with tertian ague, and on the 27th of March, he paid the last debt of nature, having reigned over England for twenty-two years. It may have been noticed that a spirit of distrust and disaffection had already begun to spring up between the king and parliament—a spirit which in the succeeding reign led to so fearful an amount of human carnage, and brought a monarch's head to the block.

CHAPTER X.

Charles I. Begins to Reign.

The Earldom of Banbury.—Proceedings in Parliament.—The Great Fire.

—The Soldiers and Civilians.—The Offenders before the House of Lords.—

"Tonnage and Poundage."—The Scotch Covenanters.—Conferences of the Opposition Leaders.—Public Events.—The Arming.—Lord Brook's Cannon brought back to Banbury and eventually given up.

ARON Knollys of the Greys, high steward of Banbury, had been created viscount Wallingford in 1616, and in the first year of the reign of king Charles I, he was raised to

the third step in the peerage under the title of earl of Banbury. He was, indeed, the first and the last undisputed possessor of that honour; for although at his death in 1632, his wife left a child named Nicholas, yet the unseemly haste with which she contracted a second matrimonial alliance with lord Vaux, coupled with the fact that the youth was brought up by the new husband as his own son, and even for some time went by his name, gave good ground for the opinion that there was more of the blood of Vaux than of Knollys in his veins. In the year 1660, this Nicholas—the son of somebody-took his seat in the house of peers as earl of Banbury; but an objection was raised to his legitimacy, and the question was referred to a committee, which eventually reported in his favour. A bill was subsequently brought into the house declaring him illegitimate; but in consequence of the advanced period of the session, it dropped through without becoming law. But the scandal referred to was so currently credited, and the feeling of the house so decidedly against him, that after one or two unsuccessful efforts, the claim to the title was quietly relinquished. On the death of this Nicholas, his son Charles also memorialised the house in vain for a call to the aristocratic chamber; but when tried for his life, he was more successful in the court of King's Bench, for he carried his objection to its jurisdiction, and as earl of Banbury demanded to be tried by his peers.

Parliament was summoned for the 7th of May, 1625, but did not meet until the 18th of June, when the Hon. James Fiennes, eldest son of lord Saye and Sele, took his seat as representative for the borough. That house of commons

numbered among its members many of the greatest men of the age—men who were determined to secure the liberties of the people by firmer bonds and better-defined limits than the constitution had hitherto laid down. They came to the resolution of granting no supplies, without equivalent concessions to the popular demands. Although this country was at war with Spain, then the richest monarchy in Europe, all that was granted for the whole year's expence, in the shape of taxes, amounted to £113,000. On the appearance of the plague in London, the legislature was removed to Oxford, when the estimated expence for all departments of state was laid before the commons, and although the government only asked for £1,200,000, the house refused to grant more than the sum already voted, and Charles at once dissolved parliament.

In February, 1626, a new house of commons was summoned, and the choice of the corporation seems to have fallen on Mr. Chambers of Williamscot, who was then a member of their own body. Very limited supplies were voted by this parliament also; and although the vote took place at the commencement of the session, yet the passing of the bill into a law was reserved until the king should redress their grievances. The duke of Buckingham, the prime minister, was impeached; and though the result was not very satisfactory to either side, the enquiry lasted for about three months. An attack was made by the house upon his majesty's prerogative of levying tonnage and poundage without the sanction of the commons—an interference which Charles so deeply resented as to induce him at once to dissolve parliament, although the supplies already mentioned had not been formally granted. The king

now demanded these subsidies from his subjects as "a loan;" he imposed other taxation in the form of "ship-money:" he received large sums from his Roman catholic subjects, on his consenting to dispense with the penal enactments against their persons and property, and allow them to worship God in their own way. A demand of £100,000, as a loan from the city of London, was met with an abrupt and peremptory refusal. Many persons who would not comply with the unconstitutional exactions then in force, were thrown into prison; and as the first nucleus of a standing army was at that time being formed, the troops were billetted upon such private citizens as had rendered themselves in any way obnoxious to the court. It was not to be expected that a place so famed for its puritanic principles, as Banbury undoubtedly was, would be allowed to escape an infliction like this; and the sequel will show that a captain's company of foot soldiers were quartered on the inhabitants of the town.

The third parliament of this reign was summoned to meet on the 17th of March, 1628, and John Crewe, Esq., of Steane, who had previously been member for Brackley, was chosen as the new representative for Banbury. But between the day of election and the assembling of the house, a dire calamity befel the town. On the forenoon of Sunday the 2nd of March, through the carelessness of a female servant, an alarming conflagration broke out in a malt-house in West-Street, then called Sugarford bar, outside the gate which stood where "the Shades" now cross the street. The numerous congregation which usually assembled in the parish church was then met for public worship, and the Rev. William Whateley, vicar, was

engaged in the celebration of that sacred ordinance which was instituted to commemorate a Saviour's love, when the terrific cry of "fire! fire!" came riding on the wing of the fierce north-west. The panic-stricken worshippers rush from the temple; but it is only to witness the forked tongue of the destroyer shooting up as if in play from the rapidly-made wreck of many a happy home. The spectators were at first paralysed by the magnitude of the impending and obviously inevitable calamity, and when they did rouse themselves to exertion, their efforts were inadequate to check the progress of the fiery tide.

Both West street and South Bar street are now blazing from end to end; whilst as if determined to sport with the feelings of the homeless, the fury of the gale increases to a tempest. Most of the buildings were constructed of timber, and nearly all of them were covered with thatch, which inflammable materials had been so dried by the wind as to serve as ready fuel to the flame. Calthorpe lane next falls under the influence of the destroying element; and although the houses in that locality were not then so thick upon the ground as they now are, yet they form convenient connecting links to convey the work of devastation onwards. Scalding lane, or Fish street, is next invested with a mantle of fire, whilst the terror-stricken inhabitants look helplessly on, as their doomed habitations are devoted to destruction. Crash after crash, the crumbling tenements fall in, and the volumes of sparks and burning flakes, carried onwards by the wing of the gale, communicate the contagion to the Coal bar in Broad street. Here the course of the destroyer seems to have been stayed, apparently

from mere lack of material whereon to expend its unabated force.

In four short hours, one third of the town lay in smoking ruins, and between five and six hundred persons were deprived of that endearing word—a home. Upwards of one hundred dwelling-houses were consumed, twenty malt-kilns and granaries laid waste, whilst the furniture, malt, and grain thus unhappily destroyed was estimated to exceed £20,000. On the following Tuesday, Mr. Whateley again mounted the pulpit, and from the text "Sin no more!" he gave his hearers an energetic address, which sounds wonderfully like a modern teetotal oration :- "Think of the place," says he, "where the burning did begin! at a kiln—a malt forge—the proper instrument of making that thing which is the next and immediate worker of drunkenness—that huge sin—that fertile, broody, big-bellied sin, which is apt to take the forms of all other sins. The fire began in a kiln; it consumed twenty others; it left no malt-kiln standing that was within its walk; it leaped from one side of the street to the other to fetch in kilns; it spared none that it came near, whilst it spoiled more malt than any other goods. Say then, brethren, is it not plain that the LORD doth admonish you of that fault, of which the liquor made from malt is the common instrument, when HE bore so hard against malt-kilns and malt."

In 1631, the Sugarford bar was re-erected at the Shades, and to commemorate the great fire of 1628, a stone was placed above the centre of the arch over the carriage-way, on which was inscribed this pithy sentiment, "Except the Lord keep the city, the watchman watcheth but in vain." All the five

bars, however, have long since disappeared, and the stone, with its inscription, may now be seen doing duty in the gable end of a cottage nigh the top of Calthorpe lane.

The soldiers quartered in Banbury were somewhat straitened for accommodation, in consequence of the increased demand for lodgings on the part of those who were thus burned out of house and home; and on this ground, a collision took place between the townsmen and military. The latter threatened to set fire to the remainder of the town, and to commit other acts of violence; until, owing to the lukewarmness, or it may have been the fears of the magistrates, George Phillips the constable summoned the inhabitants to his aid, and resolved to do his duty at all hazards. At first, he got rather roughly handled; but the townsmen coming to his assistance in considerable numbers, they managed at last to give a thorough thrashing to the men Not satisfied with this, Phillips had the ringleaders up before the mayor and magistrates; but the bench dismissed the charge on the ground that the justices had no jurisdiction, and that military men were amenable only to martial law. The constable, however, had powerful friends to back him, and being dis-satisfied with their worships' interpretation of the statutes, the subject was not allowed to rest here. It was brought before the house of lords on the 26th of March, by the interposition of the earl of Devon, and witnesses were called to give evidence of the fray. On the 2nd of April, Mr. Hill the mayor, Mr. Knight the magistrate, captair. Elveston the officer in command of the detachment, lieutenant Rhynd, sergeant Branch, and three private soldiers, were all brought before the house in the custody of the sergeant-at-

arms. The evidence, for and against, was again gone into, and was followed by a warm discussion among their lordships; but it was eventually resolved that the whole of the offenders should be admonished at the bar. The mayor and magistrate were rebuked for not having punished the disturbers of the peace, when brought before them by the borough constable; but as the house was of opinion that this denial of justice arose from their lack of knowledge in a disputed point of law, and as they had subsequently been both earnest and successful in preventing any further breaches of the peace, they were ordered to be dismissed on the payment of the fees. The constable was requested to continue to do his duty temperately but firmly, so as to give no ground of complaint against him. The memters of the military profession were enjoined to conduct themselves more in accordance with the laws of the land, submitting themselves in all things to the civil rulers; but as they had obviously been labouring under the mistake that their officers alone had the power of punishing them, the house had resolved that their recent misconduct should be overlooked.

In parliament, the grievances of the nation formed the chief topics of complaint: the billetting of soldiers on private families, the arbitrary imprisonment of unoffending citizens, the illegal exaction of forced loans or contributions, the "acts of power against law, and the judgments of lawyers against liberty" were sweepingly denounced from the opposition benches, and condemned by nearly all the members of the house of commons. The "petition of rights" passed both houses of parliament, and although evaded at first, it was afterwards ratified and confirmed by the king. The duties of tonnage and poundage

which had hitherto been granted for life to each reigning prince from the time of Henry V., for the purpose of enabling him to keep up a navy for the defence of the coasts, were now declared a violation of the liberties of the people and an infringement on the petition of rights. But this declaration was put a stop to by the unexpected arrival of the king, who forthwith prorogued the legislative assemblies.

The prime minister, the duke of Buckingham, had fallen under the assassin's knife, and the houses of parliament were again summoned to assemble on the 20th of January, 1629. The debates on tonnage and poundage were resumed; a remonstrance was framed which the Speaker refused to put; he was forced back into the chair and there he was held; the remonstrance, branding those who levied tonnage and poundage as capital enemies of the commonwealth, and those who paid them as betrayers of England's liberty, was then passed by acclammation. A violent rupture took place between the king and his "faithful commons;" the parliament was dissolved, and several of its most refractory members thrown into prison. The contested tax of tonnage and poundage was now levied by the authority of the king alone; and it appears by the records of the corporation of Banbury, that the law was ordered to take its course against four burgesses for refusing to pay their portion of assessment for the maintenance of the royal household.

In 1632, on the death of the earl of Banbury, William lord Saye and Sele was unanimously chosen high steward of the borough—a convincing proof that the patriotic principles which that nobleman was known to entertain were in perfect

unison with those held by the leading men in the town. In 1634, ship-money was first exacted by the arbitrary power of the king alone, and although at first confined to the seaport towns, it was shortly afterwards extended to the whole king-The county of Oxford was assessed at one ship of 280 tons and 112 men, the estimated expence of which was £3,500. Of this sum, Banbury was ordered to contribute £40, although it had not recovered from the effects of the recent conflagration; Oxford, £100; Chipping Norton, £30; and Woodstock, £20. It may also be interesting to know that Brackley, Daventry, and Stratford-on-Avon were each assessed for shipmoney in £50. Mr. Francis Andrew, mayor of Banbury, was deputed by the council to visit London, in the hope of obtaining the remission of a portion of the tax; but the corporation records fail to inform us of the success of his mission, although they hand down the fact that he charged £1 6s. 8d. for the expences of his journey.

In 1637, Hampden, Pym, Cromwell, and several other leaders of the parliamentary party, despairing of the final success of their cause, chartered eight ships to carry them and their goods to America; but the short-sighted policy of the king induced him to issue a proclamation forbidding their departure. Viscount Saye and lord Brook were also about to take their departure for the same distant region, and had actually founded the town of Saybrook in the state of Connecticut, in the hope of enjoying that freedom abroad, of which the policy of their rulers deprived them at home; but they were prevented doing so from the same cause. It were vain to speculate now as to what would have been the result,

if the departure of the patriot band had been permitted; but the probabilities are, that Charles would have had an easy triumph over every opponent, and that the growing liberties of England would have met a fatal check.

In the course of the same year, Hampden was cited to appear before the court of Exchequer, on the charge of having refused to pay the sum of twenty shillings, due as ship-money from his estate in the county of Bucks. The trial lasted for twelve days, and was conducted before the whole of the judges in the land. Of course, it was decided in favour of the crown, although four of the judges were of opinion that the defendant was justified in resisting the payment. But Hampden's object was accomplished; the nation was aroused to the magnitude of the crisis; the people saw that if the monarch was to be allowed to tax his subjects at will, there was an end to every thing like liberty in the country.

An attempt to establish the liturgy in Scotland was accompanied with such an outburst of tumultuous indignation that it was not deemed prudent to try it again. The bishops were attacked in the streets, and the presbyterian pulpits resounded with invective and declamation. Private interests united with a love of liberty in opposition to the sovereign's will, and the result was the combination of a whole people. In February, 1638, Charles published a proclamation; but this was met with a counter-protestation, and "the solemn league and covenant" was formally adopted. A general assembly was convened in Glasgow, and by its decree, episcopacy in Scotland was declared to be abolished. To encounter the covenanters, the king marched an army of 20,000 men into Scotland, in

the course of the following year; but being far from certain that the English parliament would not side with those who were now in arms north of the Tweed, he agreed to a cessation of hostilities on rather humbling terms, and that too without provoking a contest.

In 1640, after an interval of eleven years, a new parliament was summoned; and Nathaniel Fiennes, the second son of lord Saye and Sele, was returned as member for Banbury. The king's object was to obtain supplies, wherewith he might be able to subdue the covenanters; but the house of commons resolved that redress of grievances should precede any vote of money, and the members were about to proceed with resolutions declaring the arbitrary collection of ship-money illegal, when the king abruptly dissolved them. Prior to the dissolution, however, a formal protestation was submitted to the peers, pledging them to hold no correspondence with the Scottish malcontents; but lords Save and Brook refused to subscribe the required declaration, and were temporarily deprived of their liberty. When the two houses broke up, Crewe, the chairman of the committee on religion, was required to give up to the ministry the petitions that had been referred to the body over which he had presided, and on his refusal to comply, he was consigned to the Tower. Not only the studies, but even the persons of the earl of Warwick and lord Brook were searched for treasonable papers, and that too before the expiration of their privileges as members of parliament. Meanwhile, the army of the covenanters entered England—as they said, to lay their "humble petition" at his majesty's feet-and on being encountered by lord Conway at

Newburn, the king's general of the horse was defeated, and his panic-stricken troops fled southward into Yorkshire.

His majesty was now in very great perplexity, and after summoning a council of peers to meet him at York, no other course was left than to assemble a new parliament. This was accordingly done, and the legislature met on the 3rd of November, when the borough was again represented by Mr. Nathaniel Fiennes—his brother James having been returned for the county. But previous to the assembling of this parliament, numerous meetings had been held by the leaders of the opposition, and long had been their discussions, and earnest their deliberations, with regard to the policy that would be requisite for them to pursue. It was obvious to the least discerning that a crisis was at hand; and they who were most likely to be drawn into the vortex acted wisely in taking council together. Many were the conferences held in Broughton castle, and frequent were the assemblies of the patriots at Fawsley, the abode of the son-in-law of the dauntless Hampden.

At the meeting of parliament, the earl of Strafford and archbishop Laud were both impeached by the commons, on the charge of having attempted to subvert the constitution, by the introduction of arbitrary and unlimited authority. In 1641, Strafford was condemned and executed; a bill was passed declaring that parliament should not be dissolved, prorogued, or adjourned, without the approval of the majority; the courts of high commission and star chamber were abolished; the princess Mary was married to the prince of Orange—an event which ultimately proved of great importance to the

nation at large; the king undertook a journey to Scotland to settle the affairs of that kingdom, Mr. Fiennes being one of the members of the house of commons deputed to attend him; an insurrection broke out in Ireland, and many protestants were put to the sword; the members of the house of commons spoke and voted in condemnation of the atrocities practised in Ireland, but they took no steps to put down the rebellion.

In 1642, the breach between the king and his people daily grew wider, and his majesty took the bold step of causing lord Kimbolton and five members of the house of commons to be accused of high treason. He even went in person to the house to secure them; but they had received notice of his coming, and were not to be found, so that Charles had to take his departure as he came, with the ominous word "privilege" ringing in his ears. The members adjourned for several days, as if in danger of imminent and deadly peril. The house of commons restored to the lords-lieutenant of counties full powers of calling out and commanding the militia; but they took care to name those who were to fill the office, and entrusted it to none but their own friends. Lord Saye and Sele was appointed for the county of Oxford, lord Spencer for Northamptonshire, and lord Brook for the county of Warwick. This proceeding on their part was doubtless an infringement upon the monarch's prerogative; and to counterbalance this armed power, now at the disposal of the house of commons, his majesty issued his commission of array. The court removed to York, and thence king Charles issued his edicts. "His towns," he said, "were taken from him, his ships, his arms, his money; but there still remained to him a good cause and the hearts of his

loyal subjects, which with God's blessing, he doubted not, would recover the rest."

The commission of array for this district was confided to the earl of Northampton, and many of the loyal gentry and yeomen were assembled at Compton Winyates in arms for the king. Lord Brook obtained a grant from the commons of six pieces of cannon for the defence of Warwick castle, and they were brought to Banbury on the 29th of July. On the following morning, his lordship started with the artillery. accompanied by an escort of one hundred and fifty men; but about a mile beyond Cropredy, they were stopped by the earl of Northampton at the head of a force nearly double in number to that of lord Brook, and about one half of the royalists were mounted. Each commander seems to have been unwilling to begin the affray, and the hostile parties stood confronting each other for some hours. Intelligence of the anticipated collision was brought back in haste to Banbury and Broughton -prompt was the response of the armed townsmen. The troops of lord Brook were speedily reinforced, both from town and country, until he had close upon a thousand men under his command, but still he hesitated to open the flood-gates of strife. The trumpets sounded a parley; the commanders met; lord Northampton produced his commission of array and demanded the cannon in the name of the king. Lord Brook, on the other hand, referred him to the act of parliament by which as lord-lieutenant he was invested with the supreme command in the county of Warwick, and pointed out to the earl the rapidly-increasing forces at his own disposal. It was eventually agreed that the cannon should be returned to Banbury castle; that lord Brook should give three days' notice before he offered to remove them; and that the earl should give a similar intimation prior to any attempt at taking them by force. It was well for the cavaliers that these terms were come to, as their opponents had absolutely hemmed them in, and were only waiting the word to open fire.

The castle was surrounded by a double moat, and was then under the command of the hon. John Fiennes, third son of lord Saye and Sele. Hasty and rude fortifications were thrown up for the defence of the town, and reinforcements arrived from nearly all parts of the district. Adderbury alone withheld its aid, lord Wilmot vowing that he would hang every man to the nearest tree who should dare to assist the roundheads against their lawful prince. On the 6th of August, intelligence was received that the royalists were about to attack Northampton, and this drew off some fifteen hundred of its defenders from Banbury—the men being naturally anxious to look after the safety of their own homes. On Sunday the 7th, the earl of Northampton arrived before the town, and planted three heavy pieces of ordnance upon Crouch hill. A captain Austen, to whom had been confided the erection of the temporary barricades at the outskirts of the town, and who whilst the enemy was afar, used to boast how he would serve them if they ventured within range of his trusty musketeersnow when confronted with positive danger, like most other braggarts, showed the "white feather," and counselled that they should all betake themselves within the shelter of the castle walls. The advice was followed, and then the valiant captain-without even bidding good-bye to his brothers-inarms—was found to be missing on Monday morning, leaving the members of the garrison to shift for themselves. A flag of truce was sent in by the earl, demanding the cannon in the name of king Charles, and threatening in the event of a refusal to fire upon the town. Its defenders were dispirited by the desertion of captain Austen, upon whose services they had been taught to place implicit reliance; they were intimidated by the rumours that had been industriously circulated, concerning the magnitude of the force now brought against them; they were disheartened by the tardiness shown in forwarding those succours which they had urgently desired; they were awed by the threats held out to induce them to submit; and in the absence of positive orders requiring them to resist, they agreed to deliver up the ordnance in dispute.

With the artillery of which he had thus obtained possession the earl attempted the reduction of Warwick castle, but was foiled by the valour of the garrison. On the 18th of August he returned to Banbury for the purpose of obtaining possession of the arms and ammunition that were still in the castle; but colonel Fiennes had now received both reinforcements and instructions, and gave his lordship such a warm reception, that he was compelled to withdraw his troops from the attack, and retire upon his mansion at Compton Winyates.

In the foregoing detail of the causes of difference between the king and the parliament, it may perhaps be thought that too much space has been devoted to the consideration of the party politics of the period; but it must be borne in mind that the rupture exercised a mighty influence over the fortunes of the district, and that some of the leading incidents of those exciting times transpired in the immediate vicinity of Banbury. It was, therefore, deemed necessary that the various causes of quarrel should be detailed at some little length, so that those who are not thoroughly read up in the history of the period may have a better understanding of the importance of the issues involved in the struggle. It may have been noticed that, like angry men generally, both parties were somewhat to blame—the king, for stubbornly adhering to those prerogatives of his exalted position which trenched so intolerably on the liberties of his subjects—the parliament, for encroaching on the prerogatives which in all monarchical governments are vested in the person of the reigning sovereign. The events. however, that have thus been detailed were only the preludes of greater incidents—the indistinct mutterings of the stormcloud that had been gathering so long, but which was destined so speedily to burst, and spread havoc and desolation along its crimsoned track.



CHAPTER XI.

To your Tents, @ Israel.

The Royal Standard unfurled.—The Parliamentarians march to Worcester.—The Skirmish at the Bridge of Powick.—The subsequent Movements of the two Armies.—The view from Edge Hill.—The Formation and Positions of the adverse Hosts.—The Council of War.—The Advance.—THE BATTLE.—Lord Wilmot's Attack and Repulse.—Prince Rupert's Charge.—Advance of the Royal Centre.—Stapylton's Attack and Lord Lindszy's Fall.—Balfour's Division silences the Royal Artillery.—Capture of the Royal Standard.—The Attack on the King's Centre.—The Sovereign and his Guard.—A Narrow Escape.—Dr. Harvey's Indifference.—The Standard retaken.—Hampden's Advance and Rupert's Danger.—The Retreat to the Hill.—The Night after the Battle.—Firing the Beacon.—Killed, Wounded, and Prisoners.—Next Day's Counsels.—The Armies Retire in opposite Directions.

ONDAY the 23rd of August, 1642, is an ever-memorable date in the annals of England; for on that day, king Charles unfurled the royal standard at Nottingham, and appealed to the loyalty and attachment of his people. Now commenced that ever-shifting drama which leads the student of history to the contemplation of many a hard-fought field, where cavaliers and round-heads have long been quietly mouldering together—a drama in which some of the best and bravest of England's sons were the actors, and on which the curtain did not finally drop, until the last scene was played out on the fatal scaffold at Whitehall. Most of the nobles and landed gentry heartily espoused their sovereign's cause, and at their own expence, many of them armed and

equipped their tenants and retainers, from whose loyalty and courage great results were confidently anticipated. Shrewsbury was appointed the rendezvous of the royalists, and here the king soon found himself at the head of ten thousand men. Lord Clarendon calculates that the estates and revenues of one particular troop of his majesty's guards—the "show troop," as it was tauntingly styled—were equal to those of all the members who voted in both houses of parliament at the period now treated of.

Nor were the leaders idle on the other side of the question. The principles of democracy had made considerable progress both in town and country, and when lord Saye and Sele commanded the militia of Oxfordshire to muster at Banbury, between eleven and twelve hundred men were found ranged under his banner. Besides these, his lordship, his two sons, and his grandson, each at his own expence raised and equipped a troop of horse, amounting in all to two hundred and fifty men. Lord Brook called out the Warwickshire contingent of militia, and Hampden marshalled those of the county of Bucks. The principal magazines of arms were in possession of the adherents of parliament, which ultimately gave them a great advantage over the royalists; but as these stores were not served out for some little time, the implements of warfare were varied and picturesque at the commencement of the campaign, if they were not uniform and effective.

Sir John Byron, with three troops of horse, was despatched by the king for the defence of Oxford; but he was so hotly attacked at Brackley on the 28th of August, that he lost about one third of his men, all his baggage, and about £700 in plate and cash. On the 10th of September, intelligence was brought to Banbury by the scouts, that Sir John was again in motion for Worcester; on which, horse and foot got under arms at once, accompanied by a goodly number of volunteers, and marched out the Chipping Norton road, for the purpose of intercepting the royalists at the Chapel of Heath. But Sir John had a vivid recollection of Brackley, and his orders being to effect a junction, he preferred taking a more circuitous route, and rested that night at Stowe-on-the-Wold.

Whilst the adherents of the king were mustering at Shrewsbury, those of the parliament were rallying at Northampton. The earl of Essex had been appointed to the command of the puritan army-lord Lindsay being the general-in-chief of the royalists. Numerous reinforcements to the last named troops were being raised in Wales, and it was agreed by the leaders of the parliamentary forces that they should march upon Worcester, for the purpose of overawing the loyalty of the neighbouring principality. Considerable numbers of Welshmen were on their way to join the king at Shrewsbury, and on the 22nd of September, colonel Sands and captain Nathaniel Fiennes were ordered to the Bridge of Powick, for the purpose of preventing their effecting a junction. Here, however, they fell in with another enemy, in the person of prince Rupert and his squadron of horse. The troops of the commonwealth were in the act of defiling from a lane and drawing up in fitting array, when they were charged by Rupert with headlong impetuosity. Colonel Sands was cut down at the head of his squadron, and the command of the shattered force devolved on captain Fiennes. Rupert had hastily re-formed his men after their first successful charge, and again, like a whirlwind, he advanced to the attack. This second onset was too much for the forces of the parliament; and although captain Fiennes bravely did his best to stem the torrent that was sweeping every thing before it, and shot one of Rupert's officers with his own hand, yet his men were now galloping in all directions but the right one, and their commander was among the last to spur his charger from the field. They were pursued for upwards of a mile, when the advanced guard of lord Essex poured in a volley that checked the pursuit, on which Rupert withdrew from the chase and retired upon Shrewsbury.

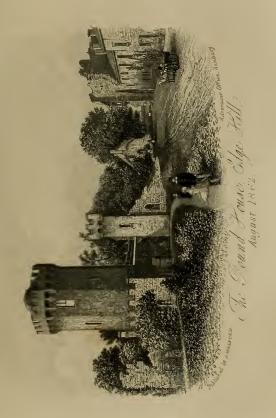
King Charles was now at the head of fifteen thousand men, and on the 12th of October he broke up from the county town of Salop, with the intention of marching upon London. On the 16th he was at Kenilworth, and on the 21st at Southam, whilst his army lay in detachments between that town and Banbury. On the 22nd, he took up his quarters at Edgcote House, the seat of Mr. Chauncey, his troops being in bivouack between that village and Cropredy. Here a council of war was held, at which it was resolved that they should attack Banbury Castle on the following day. But the following day found them in other work. The two thunder-clouds were drawing nearer and nearer, and the first of those explosions which were to shake England to its centre was destined to take place upon that very day.

The earl of Essex, finding that the king had turned his flank and was already between him and the metropolis, hurried onward by steady marches, and on the night of the 22nd encamped at Kineton. Rupert and his cavalry had taken up their quarters at Wormleighton, and thus acted at once as outpost and rear-guard to the royal army. Late at night, one of his videttes brought him intelligence of the near approach of the puritan forces, and getting his men under arms to prevent a surprise, he despatches a messenger to Edgcote with the news. The officers in command of divisions were immediately summoned to the royal presence, a short council of war was held after midnight, and it was there decided that battle should be offered on the following day. By early dawn, the cavaliers were in motion, and the roads through Cropredy, Mollington, and Warmington, were thronged with armed men hurrying to battle.

The morning of Sunday the 23rd of October finds the fated monarch along with prince Rupert on the summit of the rising ground ascending so precipitously from the vale of the "red horse" and the valley of the Avon. Below him there is spread forth a landscape thoroughly English in its every feature. It presents to the eye of the spectator a wide expanse of fields, and hedge-rows, and scattered villages, where the modest church tower peeps forth from the foliage of the surrounding trees, and whence the silver sound of the church-going bell has summoned successive generations to the house of prayer. In the far north-east, there may be seen the three tapering spires of bustling Coventry, whilst the dim peaks of the distant Malverns may be discerned bounding the horizon on the left of the plain. The lovely valley of the Avon stretches far away on the right and left, from the hoary castle of Warwick, which rung of old with the clang of steel, to Evesham's ancient

abbey, where the monks of other days were duly observant of matin song and vespers. It embraces in its sweep the Shaksperian associations of the classic Stratford—that magic temple of the muses of which England is so proud, recalling the memory of her most gifted bard. The visitor to Edge Hill may easily discern the spot where it stands, the spire of the collegiate church being clearly visible to the naked eye. The river itself may be seen winding and twisting along the outspread plain, whilst its waters glisten like a silver cord in the mellowing rays of the autumn sun. This magnificent expanse of landscape may best be witnessed in all its glorious beauty from the elevated tower of the Round House, a well-patronised place of public entertainment, and one which forms the best centre from which the visitor can explore the interesting site of the events now to be described.

There was one point in the landscape on which the gaze of king Charles was closely rivetted. That spot was Kineton—the village that may be observed at a short three miles distance to the northwards, where the trumpets of lord Essex are now sounding to arms. The appearance of Rupert's cavalry, on the brow of the hill, have given the first intimation to the parliamentary commander that the enemy are in his immediate vicinity, and promptly he draws up his troops to meet them. Battalion after battalion may be seen emerging from the village, each troop, squadron, and company steadily taking up its allotted ground. King Charles stands leaning against a stump on the hill side, a short way above the hamlet of Radway, the withered leaves of autumn thickly strewed around, and heaving a sigh, he says to a gentleman on his staff who had ventured





to ask the cause of his sadness, "I never saw rebels in a body before." It is, indeed, a sight well calculated to teach the monarch a most salutary lesson—a spectacle on which he cannot look without having reason to question the accuracy of his previous notions about "the divine right of kings," when he sees those earnest men forming so steadily, to peril their lives in defence of their liberties.

The forces of the parliament number thirteen thousand men, Hampden's division of three thousand being a day's march in the rear, and consequently not included in that enumeration. The centre consists of the earl of Essex's own regiment of infantry, supported by lord Brook's militiamen from Warwickshire in their purple uniforms, and the London red coats of colonel Holles forming the reserve at a short distance to the rear. The right wing is composed of three brigades of cavalry, the van formed by the troops under the command of Sir William Balfour, the main body of the wing consisting of the life-guards of the general encased in mail, commanded by Sir Philip Stapylton as brigadier, together with the brigade of Sir John Meldrum, in which the Broughton horsemen in their blue uniforms take their orders from Nathaniel Fiennes. Here also are the troops of lords Grey and Willoughby of Parham, captains Draper, Hunt, and Hesslerig. These are covered by a small park of artillery, and flanked on the extreme right by three detached troops of horse under the command of colonel Fielding. The space between the right wing and the centre is occupied by the infantry of Sir William Constable, of which the Oxfordshire militia form the principal portion. The left wing consists of the main body of cavalry, under the command of Sir James Ramsay, supported by the infantry of lords Wharton and Mandeville. The intervening space between the left wing and centre is occupied by a regiment of foot led on by colonel Chumleigh, supported by that of colonel Charles Essex, whilst the grey coats of colonel Ballard form the reserve.

From battalion to battalion, from rank to rank, ride the earnest puritan divines, enjoining the soldiers to acquit themselves like men, and show to the world that they are worthy sons of gallant sires. They exhort them bravely "to fight for the faith once delivered to the saints;" to display their valour as the chosen champions of Jehovah's cause; to "resist unto blood striving against sin;" to go up with joy "to Ramoth Gilead to battle;" to wield unsparingly the conquering "sword of the Lord and of Gideon;" assuring them, at the same time, "that His hand is not weakened that it cannot smite, nor is His arm shortened that it cannot save." Ah, well may the king look on in sadness as he witnesses the defiling of that formidable array!

The royalist army is drawn up in order along the brow of the eminence, as regiment after regiment arrives on the scene of action, the right wing resting upon Bullet-hill, the left upon the road by the Sun Rising inn, and the hamlet of Radway forming the advanced post of the centre. His majesty's tent, with the royal banner displayed, is pitched a little to the left of the Round House, and the king himself is said to have taken a hasty breakfast in one of the cottages of Radway, now occupied by his advanced guard. The centre of the royalist army consists of three brigades of infantry drawn up in contiguous close columns of battalia, the brigade of foot guards

under the command of lord Willoughby, flanked on the right by general Ruthven's division, and on the left by that of Sir Jacob Astley. Sir John Byron's troopers act as a reserve, covered with a body of Welsh recruits. Prince Rupert commands the cavalry of which the right wing consists, and conspicuous among others, here is the famous "show troop" already alluded to. Colonel Washington protects the eastern flank of this division with a small body of regular cavalry and a detachment of dismounted dragoons. The left wing, which occupies the ground by the Sun Rising, is entrusted to lord Wilmot of Adderbury, consisting of two regiments of mounted troopers, covered by lord Carnarvon's division of pikemen and musketeers, and flanked by lord Digby's four troops of horse. It is past noon ere these formations of the forces are completed -the noon of that quiet English sabbath on which many a silent prayer has been offered up, by anxious hearts in unforgotten homes, for the safety of husband, brother, father, or son, now fronting the foe in martial array. Yes, it is the first day of the week—the interval of rest—the sabbath of the Christian, that must now be broken in upon by cries of fierce contention -that must now be desecrated by the perpetration of atrocities inseparable from war.

The call passes along the line, "Generals of division, to his majesty's tent!" and straightway each commander repairs to the presence of his sovereign, where the question is debated what is next to be done. Lord Essex has halted his line of battle on the plain, and shows no disposition to commence the attack. The experience of lord Lindsay prompts him to suggest to the royal council, the prudent advice that they shall receive the

enemy's onset in the strong position which they now occupy: but the fiery Rupert is in favour of an immediate descent into the plain. The discussion waxes hot, and continues for some time, until a message is brought that the round-heads are again advancing. Then the eloquence or the influence of prince Rupert prevails, and the hasty conclusion is arrived at, that they shall leave their ground of vantage on the hill, and come to close quarters on equal terms upon the plain. Now it is that Charles mounts his prancing war-horse, and arrayed in glittering armour rides along his lines, encouraging his men to deeds of daring: "Your king," says he, "is in the midst of you; he is your cause, your quarrel, and your captain; come life, come death, he will bear you company." Now it is that good old Sir Jacob Astley kneels down at the head of his men and prays, "O Lord, Thou knowest how busy I must be this day; if I forget Thee, do not Thou forget me!" Then rising. he adds in a cheering voice, "Now my boys, march on!"

"Forward!" is the order from end to end of the line, and each heart beats high with anticipations of victory as the cohorts of the king descend the hill. A flash glances forth from the lines of the parliamentarians, and the round shot crashes into the hill-side between the descending ranks of the royalists,

"The game's begun;" says lord Willoughby, addressing Sir Edmund Verney, the royal standard bearer; "but we shall find out who will crow loudest ere set of sun."

"Possibly so," replied Sir Edmund, with a melancholy smile; "but that is an hour which hundreds among us will not live to see."

Another thundering sound from the puritan artillery comes sweeping across the plain, preceded by the rush of hissing iron, suddenly cutting short the opening dialogue; and it is no reflection on their manhood to say, that hundreds on both sides wished themselves away. "Let the cannon open in reply!" is the order given to the commandant of the royalist guns; and in obedience to the mandate, volumes of smoke and flame are belched forth from throats of iron, whilst the artillerymen bend their eager eyes on the distance, in the direction of the spot where the missiles strike, to see if their guns have been accurately pointed. But Stapylton, at the head of the life-guards of lord Essex, is now in front of the king's left, and threatens by a bold manœvre to turn the flank, when Wilmot receives the order to check his advance. "Adderbury and king Charles! forward my heroes! charge!" shouts Wilmot, as sabre in hand, he leads them on. The shock of the collision was tremendous, followed as it was by the fierce hand to hand struggle between Englishman and Englishman-

"Then 'spur and sword' is our battle-word,
And we make their helmets ring,
Shouting like madmen while we strike,
'For God and for the king.'
But, though they snuffle psalms, to give
Those rebel knaves their due,
When the roaring shot pours thick and hot,
They are stalwart men and true."

And here the "rebel knaves" have really the best of it; for, after a keen contention, lord Wilmot's troops recoil before the iron onset of the life-guards, and his force is thrown back

headlong on the centre. Sir Arthur Ashton attacks colonel Fielding's three detached troops of horse, on the extreme right of the parliamentary line, and being supported by Sir John Byron with the reserve cavalry, who had been coming round by the Sun Rising inn as the easiest mode of descending to the plain, the small force opposed to them is soon put to the rout. Instead, however, of wheeling their squadrons upon Stapylton's rear, and thus reaping the full fruits of their temporary advantage, they are led away in pursuit of the small party of flying puritans, and the troops under their command are of no further service to their master's cause throughout the residue of this eventful day.

On the royalist right, Rupert is steadily descending the hill -as steadily is Sir James Ramsay advancing to meet himwhen Sir Faithful Fortescue, who commands a squadron of the parliament horse, dashes forth from the ranks along with his lieutenant, flings from him the orange scarf, the colours of lord Essex and the symbol of his party, and followed by all his men, goes off at full gallop to join the royalists on the charge. The regiment to which these men belonged had been professedly raised to aid in quelling the Irish rebellion, and possibly their sympathies were in favour of the king; but at all events, their desertion is fatal to the division with which they have served till now; for, with the eye of a hawk, Rupert observes the confusion occasioned by the incident, as well as the gap thus caused in the enemy's wing, and resolves on the instant that they shall have no time to remedy either the one or the other. His men are formed in a triple line, and on they come at a steady gallop. Scarfs are waving,

feathers fluttering, the locks of their loved ones floating on the breeze; the horses are tossing their heads, playing with the rein, champing the bit, and plenteously bedewing the ground with snowy foam; the riders are terribly in earnest, carefully with their left hand guiding the bridle, the glittering sabre gleaming in their right. As a wave of the ocean, when heaving on high before the wing of the tempest, acquires greater impetus the further it rides along the bosom of the deep, so this living tide increases in volume, velocity, and power, as firmly and swiftly it approaches the foe.

"Charge!" thunders prince Rupert, waving his sword around his head, full three lengths of his war-horse in front of his men; "Charge!" shouts prince Maurice, who is entrusted with the command of the second line; and "Charge!" is repeated by the gallant lord Bernard to whom is confided the leadership of the show troop. Fortescue's deserters fare but badly at the hands of their new friends, as twenty-eight of them fall in the headlong onset, ere the cavaliers can distinguish their allies from their foes. But still the impetuous torrent rushes on, sweeping every thing before it in its resistless course. The puritan line of battle is weakened, in consequence of its being in the act of extension to close up the opening caused by the recent instance of wholesale desertion, and its leader appears to have been momentarily bewildered, not knowing how far the disaffection has spread. The rushing wave of cavaliers bursts like a thunderbolt on that weakened, wavering front, and down go the round-heads, horse and man. Right into the puritan ranks the mighty hurricane sweeps on, and the leading squadrons are absolutely annihilated.

"Close up the infantry! forward the reserve!" shouts the parliamentary commander-in-chief, as he gallops towards the scene of irremediable disaster; "Close up your ranks, and keep out both friend and foe." But it is too late! the scattered cavalry are inextricably mingled with the foot, and vain is every effort of the lords Wharton and Mandeville to restore order in their broken battalia. Not only are these regiments in hopeless confusion, but the connecting links between the left wing and centre, the regiments of colonels Chumleigh and Charles Essex, are also thrown into disorder from the same cause. Colonel Ballard contrives to keep his reserve of grey-coats well in hand, and when the whirlwind has swept past, he occupies the ground thus summarily cleared of its defenders. Lord Brook's battalion of Warwickshire militia, and Holles' regiment of Cockney red-coats are wheeled up and fronted to the left by lord Essex in person, in order that they may successfully resist any attack that may be made on that unprotected flank of his centre.

Where now is that "man of iron," who played his part so bravely on many a subsequent field? Where is Cromwell and his hardy troop? Where is the blade that was so oft deepdyed with the blood of the foe? Where the nervous arm that so frequently stemmed the surging tide of battle, and so often snatched victory from the very jaws of despair? Cromwell was then but a young soldier, and has suffered much oblequy in consequence of his absence from the field of Edge Hill. He was publicly charged by Holles with cowardice, perfidy, ambition, and hypocrisy; but however much opinions may differ as to the three last items in the accusation, yet his

personal courage was too often displayed, and that in circumstances of extremest peril, to place the question of his bravery beyond cavil or doubt. A royalist writer of the times tells us that he got high up into the steeple of a church—said to be that of Burton Dasset—and when he witnessed the rude repulse of the cavalry, he was in such haste to be gone as to swing himself down by the bell-rope, instead of the more leisurely method of descending the stairs. The probability is, that Cromwell had, on the previous evening, been placed where he was on outpost duty; that in the hurry of the events of the morning, his commander had forgotten to recall him; and that his own notions of military discipline were too strict to allow him to leave his post without orders.

The whole left wing of the parliamentary army, horse and foot, skirmishers and supports, is now flying in confusion to the village of Kineton. Rupert's cavalry is in unsparing pursuit, and well may it be said of them, that

"With crimson'd fetlock deep in blood, The fierce dragoon, through battle's flood, Spurs his wild war-horse on."

The state of things, in this part of the plain, may rather be said to resemble a carnage than a battle. In order to clear a way for their own escape, the despairing troopers of the parliament ruthlessly cut down their own routed infantry; whilst Rupert's cavaliers, slashing and thrusting at every fugitive they come up to, are ploughing their way through the rapidlythinning and panic-stricken crowd. It is at such moments as these, that man casts behind him all the finer feelings of

his nature, and is transformed for the time into the resemblance of a fiend. On they thunder, pursuers and pursued, leaving behind them a broad and bloody track to mark the course of that ghastly race from the Bullet-hill to the street of Kineton. Here, however, their course is stayed. The baggage waggons of the puritans present stronger attractions than are offered by the chance of a further pursuit, and the congenial work of plunder detains the royalist troopers from the place where they are soon right sorely wanted. But they are too busy just now to bestow a thought upon their struggling comrades—too deeply engrossed with the appropriation of their neighbours' goods to think for a moment of the further pursuit of a flying foe.

It may be observed that, at the council of war held at noon, there was a difference of opinion between lord Lindsay and prince Rupert. It was something more; for it resulted in an absolute quarrel, and the veteran earl resigned the leading-staff of an army, the operations of which he was not allowed to direct. The command of the centre, to the operations of which, the reader's attention has now to be called, consequently devolves on general Ruthven, an officer of considerable continental experience. After resigning the command, lord Lindsay is to be found fighting on foot at the head of his own Lincolnshire regiment. Although a brave and gallant soldier, prince Rupert is certainly the most intractable of subalterns, and generally gave his nominal commanders a world of trouble. In the dashing onset already described, like Picton of later times, he had charged without orders; and to take advantage of his success, Ruthven is compelled to

advance the right of his centre as far as the ground where the farm houses of Thistleton and Battleton now stand. None of the land on this part of the plain was then enclosed, and a better spot for playing out the deadly game in which the combatants were occupied, need not have been desired by any commander.

After having disposed of lord Wilmot and the left wing of the royalists, who were chased by Balfour's division and the Broughton cavalry far along the table land at the brow of the hill, Sir Philip Stapylton re-forms his Ironsides in a double line, and shouting his battle-cry "for God and his cause," he hurls them against the foot guards under lord Willoughby. The struggle is deadly but not long. The unbroken infantry are able to maintain their ground, the front ranks kneeling, the rear steadily delivering their fire, and the life guards of the lord-general recoil from the assault upon that marble wall of living men, leaving colonel Charles Essex dying behind Again both sides pour forth that iron storm which bids fair to pound every living object to the dust-each withering volley now "nearer, clearer, deadlier than before." The two centres are within pistol shot, when the indomitable Stapylton renews the attack; but on this occasion, the effort is not made with the life guards alone. The troops of lords Grey and Willoughby of Parham, of captains Draper, Hesslerig, and Hunt, are ordered to the front to take part in the onset. The Lincolnshire regiment is the first to receive the force of the puritan shock, and its veteran commander-late the leader of the royal host—is stretched helpless on the field, mortally wounded in the thigh by a musket ball. His son

lord Willoughby, the officer in command of the foot guards of the king—it may be noticed that there is a lord Willoughby in each army—wheels up a wing of the red regiment to his father's rescue. But the effort of filial affection is in vain, and he too is a captive in the hands of the assailants. Having driven the Lincolushire regiment from position, Stapylton directs his force upon the foot guards, now menaced from the rear with a new danger.

Sir William Balfour and Nathaniel Fiennes, returning from their hasty pursuit of Wilmot, make a gallant dash at the royal artillery. The slender covering party left for the protection of the guns is scattered at the first onset of the puritan horse, and as the gunners vainly endeavour to rally amid the ordnance, they are cut down by the sabres of the riders. Balfour's men have no materials for spiking the cannon, nor is there time sufficient to effect their removal; so the parliamentary leaders order the ropes and gearing to be cut, re-form their squadrons, and scour along the plain, for the purpose of attacking the king's foot guards in the rear, whilst Sir Philip Stapylton's division is hewing away at the front. This onset from all quarters is more than mortal man can endure, and the brave brigade of foot guards is effectually doubled up. Lionel Copley makes a heroic dash at the royal standard; Sir Edmund Verney defends it bravely. A hand of each grasps the flag-staff of the coveted prize, whilst the quivering steel is flashing in the other. In this single contest, Copley has the advantage, and after cutting down his antagonist, he gallops across the plain with the spoils of war, and presents the banner of his sovereign to the puritan commander, who

gave it to Chambers his secretary, with strict injunctions to take the greatest care of it. But, meanwhile, the red regiment of the king's foot guards is effectually broken, nearly every man being killed or taken prisoner.

Whilst matters are taking this turn on the left flank of the royal centre, movements are being effected on the right which are far from favourable to the royal cause. Lord Brook's Warwickshire militia succeed in turning that flank of the king's troops, whilst the red-coats of colonel Helles and colonel Ballard's greys are steadily advancing to the attack in front. Hesslerig's dragoons, too, have galloped round by the rear of the puritan main body, and seem ready once more to pounce upon their prey. It is a gallant onset, and it is met right gallantly. Here is general Ruthven the new commander of the royalists, and the struggle is waged hand to hand and man to man. Many a death-blow is given in the strife. There is no time now to prime or load; "pikemen, to the front!" "puritans, push home for God and liberty!" "cavaliers, strike stoutly for God and king Charles!" But slowly and sullenly the latter give ground-clubbing their muskets and shortening their pikes as they retire-falling back as it were inch by inch. In vain is the noblest blood of England freely poured forth in her sovereign's cause; the men who have hitherto been held up to ridicule by the followers of the king now show that they too are Englishmen; they give the best possible proof that they also are in earnest; they demonstrate incontestably that to them their country's freedom is dearer by far than their own personal safety-her liberty more precious than life itself.

Mark yonder rising ground, a short quarter of a mile to the westward of Radway church! the mound is planted, so there will be no difficulty in recognising it as the spot selected by the king, from which to view the progress of the battle. Hour after hour, from that elevation, has he intently watched the changing features of the varying field. He has seen the whirlwind charge of prince Rupert sweeping every thing before it, leaving its course marked by the dying and the dead. has witnessed the stern puritans rally again, and re-occupy the ground from which Rupert had driven them. He has observed the indomitable steadiness with which the main body of their army has advanced to the attack under the personal command of the general-in-chief. He has seen the fierce onset of fiery Balfour, and well has he noted the stubborn charges of Stapylton. Now he witnesses the tide of battle sweeping onward to the rear, in the direction of the place where he has taken his stand. He looks around him on his body-guard of gentlemen pensioners, and calling attention to the fact that there are still two regiments of infantry unbroken, he proposes with this small force to charge the nearly-victorious puritans, in the hope of retrieving the fortunes of the day. But the experience of those around him enables them to point out to his majesty the utter futility of this last hope, and the certain and inevitable loss which the attempt must entail upon his cause. They call his attention to the fact that these two regiments were now able to keep the enemy somewhat in check; but if they were brought to close quarters, they must be borne down by the retiring tide, and then there would be no obstacle between the puritans and a complete victory.

They even went the length of advising the king to withdraw from the field, and with such of the scattered horsemen as could be collected at the moment, to retire upon Oxford, then as ever true to his interests. But to this counsel, he would not listen for a moment:—"No!" says he, "I promised my brave men that I should live and die in their midst, and Charles Stuart will show them that he can keep his word."

"Have at the tyrant!" cries Stapylton, after he had overthrown the red regiment of foot guards; "have at the tyrant! youder he is skulking in the rear. Have at the tyrant, and our country is free!" "Down with the tyrant!" resounds on all sides as the maddened cavalcade comes sweeping across the plain. But well for the king, there is a lion in the path. Adam Hill of Spaldwick rallies two troops of the royalist horse, and with the cry, "For God and king Charles!" he throws himself between the hunter and his prey. The check is but momentary, for the gallant band is soon borne down by the superior numbers of the puritan horse; but that moment is sufficient for the safety of the king, who canters back with the pensioners of his guard to his former position at the brow of the hill.

There is one man unmoved amid the mighty turmoil. See him, as he sits upon the grass turning over the pages of a favourite author! For him, the subtle truths of philosophy have a greater charm than the dynasties of kings, or than rending the sceptre from a monarch's grasp. Beside him are two boys, ten and twelve years of age, who are watching with interest the charging squadrons as they gallop to and fro, and commenting with child-like eagerness on the different phases

of the strife. That man is Dr. William Harvey, physician to the king and tutor of his boys, each of whom is destined in after days to be a king. They learned the lesson but indifferently which the scene before them was calculated to teach; or the results would have been better both for their country and themselves. But whistling bullets and charging squadrons are things that will rouse even philosophy itself from the deepest reverie it was ever plunged in; and as the ear-piercing shouts of the strife draw nearer, and the "ping" of the musket balls comes cheeping through the air, like the sound of a garden bee on a windy day, Dr. Harvey deems it prudent to shift his ground, and remove his pupils to a less dangerous locality.

Captain Smith, belonging to the "show troop," seeing Chambers the general's secretary curvetting about the field and waving the captured standard around his head in triumph, selects two of his comrades in whom he could trust, and each of them having provided himself with one of the orange scarfs that had been cast off by the troopers of Sir Faithful Fortescue, they venture themselves boldly amid the puritan host. Riding up to Chambers, Captain Smith addresses him in an authoritative tone, "That banner, sir, is too important a trust to be longer confided to the care of a mere penman, but the general is obliged to you for the attention you have bestowed on it; give it to me!" The secretary, nothing doubting that the person who thus addressed him was an officer of rank in the puritan army, unhesitatingly consigned to him the hard-won trophy; and the captain, having thus obtained possession of the coveted treasure, rode along unquestioned amid the confusion incidental to such a scene, until he came to an opening in the lines, when putting spurs to his horse, he regained the hill amid a perfect hailstorm of puritan bullets. He was not long in finding an opportunity of restoring the rescued standard to the king; and that same evening, under its fluttering folds, he was dubbed the first knight-banneret on battle-field since the reign of Henry VIII.

In Sir Walter Scott's novel of Old Mortality, one of the characters makes the observation that he had taken up the trade of soldiering at an end easy to learn—that of despoiling an enemy and appropriating his goods. This he designates by the graphic term "spooldering," which, if early recollections do not deceive us, is a northern phrase having reference to plunder. Amid the waggons at Kineton, prince Rupert is busily engaged in this interesting and easily-acquired branch of military science, when intelligence is brought him that the fortunes of the day are going sorely against his uncle's cause. To withdraw his men from the congenial occupation in which they are engaged is, however, no easy task. Vainly the trumpets sound "to horse!" for discipline has not yet succeeded in teaching these troopers that "the first duty of a soldier is obedience." Gorged with plunder, it is with the greatest difficulty that these marauders can be dragged from their prey. But a counsellor appears, who is possessed of greater powers of persuasion than ever trumpeter could boast of, for the green coats from the Chiltern hills now arrive upon the scene, and self-defence calls on the plunderers to form.

Hampden and his division have been toiling through heavy roads ever since early dawn, for the purpose of effecting a junction with his commander; but when the deep booming of the cannon announces unmistakeably that the conflict is begun, he leaves two of his regiments to bring up the stores and heavy guns, and pushes on with the two others and a few light field pieces, to take his part in the perils of the day. He meets the survivors of the scattered squadrons of the left wing, and succeeds in halting many of the runaways. He calls their attention to the fact that their comrades are still striving for the mastery of the field, and urges on them the necessity of returning to their duty. He gets them into something like order, and they go back under his command to the vicinity of Kineton. Thus Rupert is menaced with a double danger; for Hampden is in his front, and his retreat is well nigh cut off by the army of Essex. The more respectable portion of those under his command have been disgusted with the work of plunder in which their comrades are engaged, and have returned in small parties to where the action is going on. In nowise daunted, he again forms his diminished squadrons in order of battle, with the intention of renewing the charge. But the ground around the village, where he is now called on to act, is no longer an open plain, but is intersected in all directions with fences and hedge-rows, which form ready-made breast-works for Hampden's infantry. The field pieces are unlimbered and open fire, whilst the matchlock men from the fences keep up a spattering discharge, which empties a score or two of Rupert's saddles, and a few well-directed round shots complete his discomfiture. In order to join his comrades on the hill, it is necessary for Rupert and his cavaliers to run the gauntlet of a considerable portion of the puritan army, whose

cross fire exact a fearful toll as they pass. It is even said that the prince cast from him his hat and feather, that he might not furnish so conspicuous a mark to the sharp-shooters of the enemy; and when he came bareheaded into the presence of the king, his majesty enquired in a tone somewhat bordering on reproach, "Ah, Rupert, why have you been so long away?" The prince replied that he had been led far from the field in pursuit of the fugitives; but that he could give an excellent account of the enemy's horse. "Aye, by Jove," broke in Sir Philip Warwick, "but if your highness thinks proper, you can give us a much better account of their carts."

How many instances of unsurpassed bravery have been witnessed in the course of this eventual day! It has already been stated how the royalist lord Willoughby attempted the rescue of his wounded father, and refusing to quit his side, was taken prisoner by the advancing puritans. The brave old man was tenderly removed, but he did not survive the shock, for he expired in the arms of his son, as he was being conveyed to Warwick castle in a private carriage belonging to lord Essex. Then there was the "good lord Falkland," who at the imminent peril of his own life was assiduous in his exertions to care for the safety of those who had thrown away their arms, and were willing to surrender themselves prisoners of "How affecting is the story of the dying puritan soldier," to quote the words of a writer in the Westminster Review, "who, with his last breath told how he had received his death-blow from his own brother, whom he had recognised in the royalist ranks. In vain did he try to turn the blow aside; the hand that had never been pressed but with brotherly

affection now blindly smote him down." It is stated that as Richard Baxter, the eminent puritan divine, was bringing the service to a close at Alcester church, nearly twenty miles off, some of the congregation heard the sound of the cannon borne along on the breeze, and the minister, having been made acquainted with the fact, enjoined all the men in the congregation to repair to the fight. Knowing that example was better than precept, he exchanges the "sword of the spirit" for that of the flesh, and putting himself at their head, he arrived on the field the morning after the battle.

That satbath sun has sunk behind the western hills, and the shadows of evening are stealing over the scene. The army of the king is bivouacked along the hill, whilst that of the parliament retains its position on the field of battle. The shadows of evening deepen into night, and a keen, cold, cutting wind sweeps over both hill and plain. Here might be seen a soulless wretch, lantern in hand, rifling the dead; a father searching for his son, a brother for one whom in infancy he loved, a friend anxiously gazing in a stranger's face in his solicitude to find a missing friend. Even amid the enemy's slumbering sentries, worn out as they are with the fatigues of the day, the son of Sir Gervase Scroop may be observed gently gliding from one prostrate form to another, in earnest expectation of finding his father. It is, indeed, "a touching story!" A quarrel of no ordinary kind had taken place between Sir Gervase and his son—the father having vowed in his anger that he would never look in kindness on that son's face again -and it was only at the council held at Edgcote, on the earnest solicitation of king Charles himself, that the quarrel

was made up and the relatives reconciled. Throughout the dangers of that eventful day, side by side had they breasted the foe, until in one of Stapylton's terrific charges, they were separated by the crowd, and when the royal lines were reformed in the evening at the brow of the hill, Sir Gervase Scroop was nowhere to be found. Thus it is that the son is now searching for his sire among the dying and the dead, and he finds him at last, but helpless and senseless from no fewer than sixteen gaping wounds. He had been cut down whilst bravely defending the royal banner, and his body reposes within three yards of the mortal remains of Sir Edmund Verney. The youth places his hand on his father's heart, and finds some warmth still lingering near the region of the fountainhead of life; like Æneas of old, he contrives to get him upon his back, and carries him within the royal lines. Restoratives are applied; the wounded man is cared for with all the anxious solicitude that filial affection could display; and, ultimately, the son is made happy in the recovery of his father.

It was a night long to be remembered by those who had done their best throughout the vicissitudes of that arduous day. No one knows the discomfort of sleeping on the ground, in the open air, during a cold frosty night in the month of October, except those who have tried the experiment; and whoever may have done so once will not be very ready voluntarily to submit to a second infliction, but for the rest of his life will be apt to regard sheets, blankets, and counterpanes, as among the most necessary contributors to human comfort. Few in either army had tasted food since the previous day, and Ludlow tells us after passing the night in his cold steel coat,

when he obtained provisions on Monday evening, he could scarcely get his jaws to do their part of the work. What a weary night must have been spent by hundreds of wounded men who are lingering in agony on that fatal plain! It is astonishing how, in moments like these, the mind reverts to the days of boyhood, the scenes of youth, and all the well-remembered sources of enjoyment in the sufferer's far-off home. Then the stern realities of his present condition come flashing across the mind, and he groans forth in anguish the deep bitterness of his heart.

But let him turn his glance to the Dasset hills, and he will see the lurid light of the beacon shining forth amid the darkness of the night, spreading far and wide the anxiouslyexpected intelligence that the hostile troops have come into collision, and that the army of the parliament lay claim to the victory. The beacon-house is still standing on the northwestern point of the range, measuring twenty feet in diameter at the base, and fifteen from the ground to the parapet. It communicated with two corresponding structures in the north, both of which were a little more than twenty miles distant, and also with a third to the southward, erected on a height looking down upon Ivinghoe. A party of parliamentary cavalry, in obedience to orders received from the house of commons, kindle the fire on the roof of the Burton Dasset beacon-house, and at the distance of forty miles, it is seen dimly-twinkling from the Ivinghoe hills, whence it is transmitted by a kindred light to Harrow-on-the-Hill, and thence to expectant thousands in the anxious metropolis. Thus, with fiery tongue, was the intelligence carried onward

from county to county, until England, Scotland, and Wales were convulsed with the news. A general assembly was at once summoned at Edinburgh, to deliberate on the steps now to be taken; and in London, great was the panic on the arrival of runaways from the field, announcing that the army of the parliament was totally routed. The alarm partially subsided on the receipt of authentic intelligence from the commanders; but the fact could not be denied that king Charles and his army still lay between the metropolis and the forces of lord Essex.

Day again dawned upon the field of battle, and the leaders on both sides once more drew up their troops in order for the fray. But the previous day's experience had taught them caution, and had shown them that they were confronting a foe not to be despised. The numbers of unburied dead. thickly-strewed as they were upon the blood-bespattered plain. preached prudence in more persuasive strains than ever dropped from the lips of eloquence. On the side of the king, lord Aubigny, Sir Edmund Verney, and colonel Munro are stretched lifeless on the field, and the brave old lord Lindsay is also a corpse. Sir Nicholas Byron, Sir Gervase Scroop, Sir Jacob Astley, Sir George Strode, and colonel Gerard are too severely wounded to resume their duties. Lord Willoughby, Sir Edward Stradling, Sir Thomas Lunsford, and colonels Rodney and Vavasour are numbered among the prisoners in the hands of the puritans. On the other side, lord St. John and colonel Charles Essex are slain, and Sir William Essex is a royal captive. About a thousand of each army are numbered with the dead, and many more among the wounded are hastening

to the brink of that dread bourne, from which when once crossed there is no return.

A council of war was held by the leaders of the parliament army; and as the whole of Hampden's division had now come up, most of the officers in command of brigades advised an immediate renewal of the onset. Hampden offered to head the attack, and pledged himself with his own fresh troops to turn the king's right, urging with all the eloquence of which he was master, the paramount importance of a decisive victory. Although the earl of Essex was dauntless as a lion in the hour of danger, yet he was timid and irresolute in the moment of success. He turned for counsel to the cautious Dalbier, who pointed out the naturally strong position now occupied by the royalist troops, as they might be seen drawn out along the brow of the hill, and the loss which must necessarily ensue from any attempt at storming so steep an ascent. He called attention to the state of their own army, many of the men being almost in a fainting condition for lack of food, and asked if there was the slightest probability of ultimate success in leading troops into action who were absolutely starving? He showed that if their present army should be defeated, they had no reserves on which to fall back, and in such a case, nothing could prevent the king from recovering the capital, a circumstance that would strike a death-blow to the puritan cause. He urged that by a flank movement and a circuitous route through a friendly district, they should still be able to prevent London from being taken, and would at the same time materially reinforce their shattered army. These counsels prevailed; and late in the afternoon, lord Essex commanded a retreat upon Warwick; but before the retrograde movement commenced, they completed their weary task of burying the dead, with the assistance of some country labourers whom curiosity or patriotism had drawn to the field. The farm steadings of Battleton and Thistleton now mark the spot where the contest raged with greatest fierceness on the plain, and "the Big Grave" points out the place where the mouldering dust of bitter enemies has long slumbered so peacefully side by side. On Tuesday morning, the king also withdrew his army from the hill, and returned to his former quarters at Edgeote. Thus drops the scene on the first act of the drama, each of the contending parties laying claim to the victory in what can only be regarded now as a drawn battle.

CHAPTER XII.

Bather an Unpleasant Time to Libe in.

Ghosts and Goblins.—Surrender of the Castles of Broughton and Banbury.
—Skirmishes at Brackley and Bradoc Down.—The Puritans routed at
Middleton Cheney.—The Death of Hampden.—Surrender of Bristol.—Siege
of Gloucester.—Battle of Newbury.—Actions in the North.—The Battle of
Marston Moor.—The Skirmish at Cropredy Bridge.—Cleveland's Charge.—
The Show Troop again.—Waller's Defeat.—Defence of the Bridge.—Separation of the Combatants.

HE fears with which superstition inspired those who were subject to its powers, in days when ignorance clouded the mind, may form matter of amusement to us who live in a more intelligent age; but these things were certainly no laugh-

ing affair for those who were visited by the infliction. It would indeed have been a subject for our wonder, if a scene so tragic as that which is faintly sketched forth in these pages, had been allowed to pass down into the dim vista of futurity without portentous visitations from the spirit world. Accordingly, in the course of the ensuing winter, the spectre-like phenomena of the Aurora Borealis are set down for ghostly armies fighting in the heavens, as if there had not been enough of bloodshed upon earth. The shepherds and herdsmen, who had first seen the shadowy illusions shooting athwart the sky, on reporting the wondrous tale to the villagers, appear to have been met with incredulity by the more intelligent among their neighbours, and take a not inappropriate method of revenge. A few nights afterwards, when the "northern lights" are again glancing through the heavens, the discredited herdsmen visit the village, and by their groans and other unearthly noises, rouse the inhabitants from their tranquil slumbers. Then by an adroit mimicry of the sounds of war, they send the terrified disbelievers to shiver in corners, or to sweat with fear under the bed clothes. A magistrate named Wood, who had been among the most incredulous of the sceptics, is so thoroughly frightened that he bids good-bye to Edge Hill, and the clergyman posts off to his majesty at Oxford with the news.

On the morning of the 26th, or three days after the battle, the king breaks up from his encampment at Edgcote, and proceeds by way of Chacombe and Warkworth to Aynho house, where he takes up his quarters until the 28th. From the heights opposite Banbury, he despatches a pursuivant and flag of truce to summon the town and castle to surrender;

but to this message a refusal is returned. One division of the royalist army is then pushed on to Broughton castle, where wool packs are hung up against the walls to deaden the effects of the enemy's shot; but the place is so effectually commanded from the adjacent heights, that after a brief cannonade the castle is surrendered, the garrison having permission to depart to their homes. The arms are secured for the use of his majesty's forces, and the castle itself is given up to plunder. On the 27th, a strong body of the king's army is drawn up against Banbury castle, garrisoned at the time with eight hundred men. But in that garrison, his majesty has as many friends as foes; and as major Fairfax, the officer in command of the Peterborough regiment—of which Sir Faithful Fortescue is lieutenant-colonel—is of the same way of thinking as his superior, it can scarcely be expected that any very determined resistance would be attempted. Accordingly, on the firing of the first shot, the white flag is hung out, and the garrison is allowed to depart on the same terms as that of Broughton. There are fifteen hundred stand of arms in the castle—a very acceptable addition to the royal stores, in the branch where the cavaliers are most deficient. The usual amount of plundering takes place in the town, and when the mayor shows prince Rupert an agreement that had been signed by the king, to the effect that no spoliation should be permitted, the prince throws it down with the quiet remark, "My uncle knows little of what belongs to the wars." There is no doubt that the plundering is contrary to the king's wish -the town's-people having already supplied the army with both cloth and provisions, on the promise of being paid for

them when his majesty could do so—and it is on record that one man, who was taken in the act, paid the last penalty of martial law. After having conferred the command of Banbury castle on the earl of Northampton, the king moves on to Oxford, where he next fixes his head quarters. An effort to retake the castle, during the absence of the earl, is made by Sir John Norris, in the course of the following December; but on hearing the news, his lordship hurries down from Oxford with a strong detachment of cavalry, and Sir John is compelled to beat a hasty retreat.

The year 1643 is attended with a stirring train of incidents. In the month of January, Hampden repulses a night attack made on the force under his command, and chases the royalists till dawn of day. In the course of the same month, the church tower of Deddington having fallen, the bells were given up on the king's requisition, to be cast into cannon for the royal service, his majesty promising to restore them when they should again be required. On the 2nd of March, lord Brook takes possession of Lichfield; but the royalists have entrenched themselves in St. Chad's cathedral, and as his lordship is surveying their position from a window in the town, he is shot dead through the eye by a random ball. On the 19th of the same month, the earl of Northampton encounters Sir John Gell at Hopton Heath in the neighbourhood of Stafford, and fighting with the greatest gallantry is slain, the command of the castle of Banbury devolving on his son. The fortress at Reading is surrendered to the parliamentary forces on the 27th of April, colonel Fielding promising to give up deserters, on condition that the rest of the garrison should be allowed to

depart in safety. Sir William Waller takes the towns of Chichester and Winchester on behalf of the parliament, defeats lord Herbert at Gloucester, thus raising the siege of that beleaguered city, whilst Hereford and Tewkesbury surrender to his arms. At Bradoc Down, the puritan governor of Plymouth is totally routed by the loyal Cornishmen, and the whole county of Cornwall acknowledges the undivided sway of the king.

On the 6th of May, there is a skirmish in the town field at Middleton Cheney, between six and seven hundred puritans of the county, and a like number of the cavaliers under the command of the gallant young earl of Northampton. The adherents of the parliament are advancing to the succour of their oppressed brethren in Banbury, when they are unexpectedly assailed by the earl, their cavalry put to flight, fifty of them killed, and upwards of three hundred taken prisoners. The affair of Stratton, fought on the 16th of May, is also decided in the king's favour, major-general Chirley the puritan commander remaining a captive in the hands of lord Mohun. On the 5th of July, at Lansdown near Bath, Sir William Waller fights a drawn battle with prince Maurice; but he is defeated on the 13th by lord Wilmot of Adderbury within a couple of miles of the town of Devizes. The patriot Hampden, prudent at the council table, eloquent in the senate, dauntless in the field, spurs his horse from a petty skirmish at Chalgrove to yield up his life in the greatest anguish. The queen has landed from Holland in Burlington Bay, and with three thousand infantry and fifteen hundred cavalry, she meets her royal husband at Edge Hill, on the same day that lord Wilmot

routs the forces of Sir William Waller. The royal party sleep that night at Wroxton abbey, and on the next they rest at Woodstock.

The city of Bristol, then next in importance to London, is defended by a garrison consisting of two thousand five hundred infantry and eight hundred cavalry under the command of the honourable Nathaniel Fiennes. Prince Rupert has effected a junction with the Cornish forces, and is now at the head of fifteen thousand men. The fortifications of the city are neither regular nor complete, and the prince resolves to take it by The assault begins on the 25th of July, the Cornishmen attacking the west side of the city in three divisions. The centre battalion has gained a footing on the ramparts, but is rudely repulsed by the valour of the garrison. On the prince's side, the attacking party led on by lord Grandison is gallantly beaten off, and its noble leader hurt to the death. A second division commanded by colonel Bellasis has no better fortune; but a third, led on to the assault by colonel Washington, succeeds in forcing a way through the curtain, and throws down the wall for the cavalry to enter. The streets of the suburbs are quickly cleared of defenders by the sabres of the horsemen; but still it is only the suburbs that are gained. The city itself is yet uninjured, and seems capable of having offered a prolonged resistance. But the governor is of a different opinion, and Bristol is surrendered on condition that the garrison shall be allowed to march out with their arms and baggage, leaving their colours, cannon, and ammunition behind. For this instance of timidity under trust, Mr. Fiennes is tried by a court martial and condemned to die; but in

consequence of previous services rendered by him and his family to the state, the sentence is remitted by the commander in chief.

The royalists next lay siege to Gloucester, which on the 10th of August is summoned to surrender. The answer deserves to be recorded here: "The governor and magistrates will keep the city for the use of his majesty, and will obey the king's commands, as signified to them by both houses of parliament." As may well be imagined, the puritans throughout the country are now in great consternation, and a strenuous effort is put forth for the relief of the beleaguered city. The army of lord Essex is reinforced, and he is ordered by the committee of public safety to aid governor Massey in his defence of Gloucester. He commences his march by Bedford, Beaconsfield, Brackley Heath, and Aynho, where he arrives on the 1st of September. There is some slight skirmishing at Deddington and Adderbury, but not of sufficient importance to impede the progress of the parliamentary general. Indeed, throughout the whole route, strong parties of the royalist horse hover upon his flanks, although they are unsuccessful in preventing him from throwing reinforcements and supplies into the besieged city. On the 20th of September, Essex encounters the king's army at Newbury, where the struggle is severe but undecided, and is only put a stop to by the approach of night. On the king's side, the earls of Sunderland and Carnarvon fall; but his majesty meets with a still heavier loss in the death of his secretary of state, viscount Falkland the noble and the good, who is laid low by a musket-shot received in the action, and whose ashes repose at Great Tew, where in happier days he was wont to reside. If every adviser of the unhappy Charles had been as prudent and patriotic as Lucius Carey the senator and statesman, the monarch might have gone down to the grave in peace.

In the north, Sir Thomas Fairfax has defeated the royalists at Wakefield, and Cromwell has gained a decided success at Gainsborough, where the gallant Cavendish is slain. But both of these victories are more than compensated by the defeat of lord Fairfax at Atherton moor, after which the marquis of Newcastle lays siege to the stronghold of Kingston-upon-Hull. There is, however, yet another turn in the wheel of fortune, for the earl of Manchester, having effected a junction with Cromwell and Sir Thomas Fairfax, gains a victory over the royalists at Horncastle, and a vigorous sally on the part of the garrison compels the marquis to raise the siege of Hull.

The Scottish parliament now declares its intention of aiding the puritans, and on the 22nd of February, 1644, an army under Leven crosses the Tyne from the frontiers of Scotland, and faces the marquis of Newcastle who is lying at Durham with fourteen thousand men. That nobleman, afraid of being enclosed between the armies of the Scotch and English generals, resolves upon retreat, and lords Fairfax and Leven lay siege to York. Rupert hurries from Cheshire to rescue the ancient city of the north, and joins his forces with those of Sir Charles Lucas and the marquis of Newcastle. The parliamentary and Scottish generals draw off from the siege, and form in order of battle upon Marston Moor. Fifty thousand Britons stand there in hostile array, and direful is the carnage, terrible the strife. The impetuosity of Rupert, who charges once more

with the royalist right wing, is checked by the cool determination of Cromwell; and, amid a terrible storm of thunder and lightning, hail and rain, the headlong gallantry of the prince hurries him and his squadrons into irremediable defeat. The royalist horse give way; the unsparing ironsides thunder on; the foot regiments of the king nighest to the right wing are totally broken; resolute to conquer or die, Newcastle's regiment alone firmly maintains its ground, and each hero falls on the spot where he fought. The parliamentary general Sir Thomas Fairfax and colonel Lambert are also successful against the royalist left wing; but after they had swept past on their career of death, Sir Charles Lucas rallies his broken forces, and leads them on against the remaining cavalry of the puritans' right. The latter are shattered and thrown back upon the infantry; but Cromwell returns from the pursuit and soon retrieves the fortunes of the day. Holding well in hand the best disciplined forces in Europe, he ever and anon launches them upon the foe, and the royalists are swept from the field, leaving their whole train of artillery behind them.

King Charles is meanwhile in the vicinity of Oxford; whilst by the most strenuous exertions on the part of the parliamentary leaders, two powerful armies take the field against him. Their object is evidently to enclose him within the circling folds of their forces; but on the third of June, he breaks through the cordon and takes his way towards Worcester "the faithful city." Sir William Waller, who commands one of these armies, receives orders to follow him, whilst the earl of Essex marches westward with the other. Waller is within two miles of the spot where the army of the king has been

encamped on the banks of the Severn, when he hears that his majesty is in full march upon Shrewsbury. The parliamentary general hastens thitherward, but learns that Charles has again wheeled in his course and is once more bending his way towards the district he had left. Having ascertained this, he too retraces his steps, and on the 20th of June he encamps at Kineton, the king having then his head quarters in Brackley. Both armies have received considerable reinforcements, and on the 28th are found facing each other from opposite banks of the Cherwell. The royal banner floats from Chacombe priory, denoting that hospitable mansion as the temporary restingplace of Charles, whilst the parliamentary general holds his court in the manor house at Hanwell. His majesty no longer declines the contest; for by advancing through Banbury, he endeavours to turn Waller's flank, and secure the vantageground of Crouch Hill. But the latter anticipates the design, and having a shorter distance to traverse, one of his divisions gains the hill as the forces of the king are defiling through the streets. His majesty then alters his plans, places his army in bivouac around the suburb of Grimsbury, on the eastern bank of the Cherwell, and on the following morning commences his march along the Daventry road. General Waller, afraid that his prey is again about to elude his grasp, moves along the Southam road in a parallel line with the king's troops, and takes up a position on the heights of Great Bourton. Thence he threatens the flank of the royalists, and for their protection, a couple of squadrons of dragoons are detached to guard the pass at the bridge of Cropredy. This small force is assailed by Waller with two thousand men, and is speedily put to the

rout; whilst another thousand of the parliament cavalry cross by a ford at Slate mill, about a mile and a quarter southward from the bridge, for the purpose of attacking the king's troops in the rear.

The division of his majesty's army under the command of the earl of Cleveland is now placed in considerable jeopardy. Waller's artillery open upon the infantry, and two strong bodies of cavalry oppose the return of any reinforcements from the main body. But Cleveland, who is as cool as he is brave, wheels up five regiments of horse to the left, and with these he makes a bold dash at the puritans. It is just such an onset as an enemy does not desire to have repeated, the first dose being generally sufficient. This division of Waller's troops are scattered by the shock, and gallop in confusion towards the bridge which they had crossed so recently, leaving eleven pieces of cannon in the enemy's hands. Nor does the division which had forded at the mill fare much better; for the forces of which it consists are driven headlong from the field by four squadrons of cavalry under the command of the earl of Northampton. Lord Bernard launches the "show troop" at the puritan division drawn up to oppose the return of reinforcements to the rear, which, however, does not await the collision, but gallops off to the bridge at a much quicker rate than is consistent with good order.

Hitherto Waller has been the assailant, but he must now act upon the defensive. His chosen troops have been defeated on the plain between the bridge of Cropredy and the village of Williamscot; he therefore withdraws the main body of his army to his former alignment along the heights of Bourton,

leaving a strong division of infantry to maintain the bridge, and another battalion for the defence of the ford. The latter, however, is soon carried, many of the defenders being taken prisoners, and some slain. But the ford alone furnishes too intricate a pass for any considerable numbers of the royalists to cross, in the face of an enemy occupying a formidable position; so the orders are, if possible, to carry the bridge by storm. The position is defended by the Tower Hamlets militia and the Kentish regiment, covered by a small battery of light field pieces, whose well-directed fire causes no small loss to the attacking columns. The approach of night compels the royalist commanders to withdraw from the assault, and the next day being Sunday, both parties rest upon their arms, facing each other from opposite banks of the river. On Sunday evening, the king receives intelligence that the puritan general Brown is advancing from Buckingham with five thousand men; and in order to avoid being enclosed between two armies, his majesty's force breaks up from its encampment by dawn of day on Monday morning, and moves upon Deddington by way of Aynho. But Waller was in no position to follow him; for independent of five hundred killed or severely wounded in action, and seven hundred who were taken prisoners, he lost upwards of a thousand men by desertion in the course of the Saturday and Sunday night. In fact, the spirit of his army seems to have been thoroughly broken, and he removes with his shattered force to Northampton.

CHAPTER XIII.

Heroic Defence of Banbury Castle.

Reasons for Attacking the Fortress.—The Leaguer.—Single Combat nighthe Causeway.—Commencement of the Siege.—The Cannonade.—Sallies of the Defenders.—Cromwell in Banbury.—Mining Operations.—Forced Work no Choice.—Distress of the Garrison.—The Devastations of the Plague.—Second Battle of Newbury.—Raising the Siege.

AVING thus disposed of the army under Waller's command, the king marched westward in quest of lord Essex; and the puritan leaders in the counties of Oxford, Northampton, and Warwick, arrived at the conclusion that this would be a favourable opportunity for wresting the stronghold at Banbury from the possession of the royal troops. It was found that in consequence of their being masters of this castle, the royalists were enabled to collect a large amount of revenue from the surrounding district; and their opponents argued, that if they could obtain possession of the fortress, they would be straitening the encmy and strengthening themselves. Accordingly, on the 19th July, 1644, the forces of the parliament began to gather in the neighbourhood, although they do not appear to have commenced active operations for the reduction of the castle, until after the lapse of rather more than a month. Separate divisions of cavalry, under different leaders, occupied the villages of Warkworth, Bodicote, Bourton, and Broughton, thus to some extent cutting

off the supplies of the defenders, and preventing free communication with those leaders of their party who were at the time on duty elsewhere.

Sir William Compton, a brother of the earl of Northampton, commanded the garnson-a duty in which he was ably seconded by colonel Green, whose experience in military matters was found to be of great service in conducting the defence. Some ten days after the puritans had commenced their leaguer, captain Clarke approached the town from Warkworth, for the purpose of reconnoitering the outworks, accompanied by a troop of Northamptonshire horse. On their approach along the causeway, lieutenant Middleton summoned his troopers to arms, crossed the bridge with a like number of the royalist cavalry, and challenged the captain to single combat. At it they went; but both of their pistols missed fire, so cold steel had to decide the affray. Middleton seems to have been the better swordsman, and after a sharp tussle of about ten minutes, he sent the sabre of his rival spinning through the air. Not a moment was to be lost; so seizing his pistol, the captain dashed it in the face of the lieutenant, and fairly turned tail not sparing his spurs. Middleton pursued, and gave him a touch of the sword point between his shoulders; but three of the puritan troopers galloped up to their officer's assistance, and prevented the royalist from completing his victory. A trumpeter arrived at the castle in the course of the afternoon, with a message from captain Clarke, stating that it was by no orders of his that the soldiers had come to his assistance; and added, what may fairly be doubted, that he would rather have died upon the spot than

have broken faith. The ancient chronicler quaintly adds, "So, it was a dishonour to be rescued, but it was no disgrace to run away." On the 22nd of August, the royalist lieutenant again crossed the bridge, and drove back the parliamentary outposts to Warkworth; but venturing too far in pursuit, he was shot through the head; whilst cornet Smith, the only other officer who accompanied the troop, was taken prisoner whilst endeavouring to withdraw his men from the hill.

On the night of the 25th, the puritan troops entered the town, and the blockade was converted into a siege. They took up a position, and planted a few field-pieces in the church overnight; whilst shortly after day-break on the following morning, the leaders of the garrison determined that a sally should be made in the hope of dislodging them. The portcullis was raised, the drawbridge lowered, and under the command of colonel Green, a detachment from the garrison marched forth. Some of them took possession of the houses in Parson's street, from which they kept up a well sustained fire on the church, whilst their comrades advanced under cover of the garden walls, and were steadily approaching in skirmishing order. But the arrival of colonel Wheatham, the puritan governor of Northampton, with a battery of heavy guns, and strong reinforcements both of foot and horse, induced Sir William Compton to issue orders for the recall of his men.

On Tuesday the 27th, colonel John Fiennes arrived, and took the command of the besieging forces—his first act being to send a trumpeter and flag of truce summoning the fortress to surrender, guaranteeing on his part that the garrison should be allowed to march out with the honours of war. The reply

of Sir William Compton was characteristic of the man: "He kept the castle," he said, "for the king; and so long as he had one man left alive to aid in its defence, they need not expect to have it surrendered." On Wednesday, the besiegers opened fire, which they kept up with great spirit both on that and the following day. Nor were the defenders backward in returning the compliment; for with matchlock, drake, and petronel, they sorely annoyed the assailants, not only in the church, but also those who were at work upon the rising batteries in the market-place and at the north bar. Finding that some houses in the immediate vicinity of the castle walls obstructed the view of the garrison, and afforded cover to the besiegers in their advance upon the outworks, colonel Green sallied forth on Thursday afternoon, with two hundred picked men, and by a judicious application of combustibles and fire, some thirty of these houses were speedily in a blaze.

It must have been an exceedingly uncomfortable time for such of the inhabitants as remained in the town; for although in those days, the engines of destruction were not worked with such rapidity or skilled precision as the modern science of slaughter has developed, nor the implements of carnage so deadly as those which the ingenuity of man has subsequently invented, yet a grenade crashing through the roof of a civilian's house, and exploding in the room where his family were at dinner, was a circumstance the occurrence of which would scarcely be calculated to improve the appetite or aid the digestion. And beside the risk of having a man's brains knocked out by a stray cannon-ball in the day-time, or having his slumbers broken in upon by the wild war-cries of a midnight

assault, an inhabitant of the town could scarcely say that his house was his own; for, before the siege began, he had to provide for the comfort of swearing cavaliers, and was now compelled to find accommodation for praying puritans, of whom there were upwards of three thousand engaged in the leaguer. The garrison numbered only about four hundred men; but such was the strength of their position, and so assiduously did they work in repairing the damages which the fortifications sustained, that the formidable force of the assailants was unable to effect a lodgment within the works.

Still, the persistence with which the attack was conducted subjected the defenders to the severest straits, and they deemed it advisable that every hazard should be run in acquainting the royalist leaders with the difficulties of their position. Accordingly, two ragged lads were each entrusted with a half note to prince Rupert, urging on him the necessity of relieving the garrison, and the messengers were let down from the wall a little before day-break on the morning of the 31st. of them, however, fell into the hands of the puritans, and of course, that message never reached its destination. On Sunday the first of September, the battery at the north bar having been nearly completed, two of the heavy guns mounted therein opened fire upon the west side of the castle, knocked down some of the chimneys, and made a trifling breach in the outer wall. On the same day, colonel Wheatham made an excursion with two troops of horse, as far as the village of Wolvercot near Oxford, at which place he understood that the duke of York was on a visit. But on his arrival at the church, he found the bird was flown, and had to rest satisfied with capturing the prince's dwarf. He then rode over to Water Eaton, in the expectation of falling in with lord Lovelace; but he only encountered that nobleman's lady, with whom he tried all his powers of persuasion, to induce her to disclose the whereabouts of her lord. For the purpose of terrifying her into a betrayal of the secret, he even carried her off a prisoner to Middleton Stoney; but finding her resolutely bent on disclosing nothing, he there set her ladyship at liberty, retaining as a prize her carriage and pair.

On the 4th of September, the garrison moved most of their heavy guns to the south front of the castle, and opened a well-sustained fire upon the battery in the market-place. A considerable amount of damage was done to the works of the besiegers in that quarter, and on the night of the 5th whilst the working parties were busily engaged in repairing the injuries done here, a strong party of the besieged was mustered within the gates, and sallied forth to attack the battery by the north bar, erected on the site of the present national schools. They succeeded in getting within the breast works, and brought off nearly a score of prisoners. Having expended much ammunition and burst two of their heavy guns, the batteries of the besiegers were silent for a week, during which they employed themselves in repairing damages, and in erecting a new battery. On the 10th, they were reinforced by a detachment of lord Kimbolton's division, and on the 14th, by the arrival of some fresh troops from Northampton. The latter brought with them a number of colliers for the purpose of springing a mine under the castle; but when these home-spun sappers fairly commenced operations, they came upon "springs"

of another character, which so flooded their works that all they could effect consisted in partially draining off the water from the outer moat.

A portion of prince Rupert's army having arrived at Evesham, with the expressed intention of relieving the beleaguered garrison at Banbury, Cromwell was despatched thither with a strong division of lord Manchester's army, to cover the besiegers against attacks from without. On his arrival, a council of war was held in the state-room of the Rein Deer inn, at which it was resolved to summon the garrison once more. Accordingly, on the 16th, a trumpeter was despatched with a flag of truce to the governor; but his reception was scarcely so friendly as to induce him voluntarily to repeat the visit. Sir William Compton informed him that the parliamentary commanders had already received the only answer which he would ever give; and if another messenger should be sent to him on a like errand, he might perchance have to find his way back without his ears, if he were not hung like a dog from the castle walls.

Finding all pacific overtures thus treated with contempt, preparations were made to take the place by storm; and for three days and nights, the whole of the besiegers' batteries poured forth an unintermitting fire of shot and shell, so that by the evening of the 22nd, a practicable breach was effected in the western rampart, and it was resolved that the next morning should witness the assault. The storming parties were assembled behind battery and breastwork at an early hour, and after a heavy cannonade, which lasted from daybreak until nine o'clock they advanced to the attack in five

divisions. The leading sections were laden with fascinesbundles of sticks and furze strongly tied up-which they threw into the outer moat at those points where the assault was to be made. They were followed by others with scalingladders, which, after passing across the moat on this precarious footing, they recklessly endeavoured to plant against the walls. But the breach in the western barrier appears to have been the principal point of attack—the others, in all likelihood having been merely feints made for the purpose of dividing the forces and distracting the attention of the garrison. Now comes the fierce struggle for life and death! down go stones and beams of wood upon the heads of the assailants, who strain every nerve to clamber up the broken wall. Muskets and matchlocks are discharged in their very faces, and the reeling ranks recoil from the strife. Elsewhere, the ladders are thrown down with their maimed occupants; and after an obstinate contest, the besiegers are driven off with considerable loss, having upwards of a hundred men killed in the attack and double that number returned as wounded. In the course of the evening, a flag of truce was sent to the castle, desiring permission to bury their dead-a request which the governor readily assented to, and which was carried into effect on the following day.

But another enemy appeared which spared neither the assailants nor assailed. The plague—or more properly, a virulent typhoid fever—raged both in town and garrison, sweeping away great numbers on each side. Of the inhabitants, too, not a few fell victims to its pestilential influence, "and the mourners go about the streets." On the part of the garrison,





the necessity for succour became still more urgent; and the king, who was then lying at Newbury, despatched the earl of Northampton to his brother's aid. By the assistance thus rendered to his followers in Banbury, the king's army was so weakened, that on the occasion of the second battle of Newbury, the earl of Manchester gained a decided advantage over his majesty's forces, and night alone prevented their total overthrow. The royal baggage and artillery were placed for safety in Dennington castle, and the king and his beaten army fell back upon Oxford.

But two days before the second battle of Newbury was fought, lord Northampton arrived in Oxford with three regiments of horse, on his way to the relief of Banbury castle, and there joined his forces with those already in that city under the command of colonel Gage. On the 23rd of October, the colonel had attempted in vain to succour the now destitute garrison of Banbury, and for this purpose had approached within a mile or two of the town. His force consisted of considerable detachments from the garrisons of Oxford, Bostock house, and Wallingford; but his object was rather to take the besiegers by surprise, and throw into the castle some portion of the supplies which he had brought with him for the purpose, than to attempt any serious operations against the assailants. Colonel Fiennes had intelligence of his approach, and met him on what is now the lawn in front of Bodicote house, where after a sharp skirmish, Gage was defeated, and the parliamentary leader chased him and his troops to the very walls of Oxford, capturing some sixty horses and good store of plunder. It was, therefore, with no small pleasure that the royalist officer hailed the arrival of the earl of Northampton, in the hope that by his assistance he would be enabled to wipe away the stain that now clouded his shield.

The puritan commander had not yet returned to Banbury, when the reinforced royalists set out in pursuit. In the course of the afternoon, the latter arrived at Deddington and Adderbury, where they resolved to quarter for the night. A council of war was held by the officers of the besieging party, to whom reports had been brought in by the scouts, that not only were there strong detachments of the enemy's troops at the villages named, but that divisions of the royal army were also advanced upon King's Sutton and Aynho, on the Northamptonshire side of the river, and by dawn on the following morning, an attack might be expected from overwhelming numbers. It was resolved by the council to raise the siege at once, and the heavy baggage and artillery were immediately sent off to Warwick, the troops being ordered to follow at five o'clock in the morning. The cavalry was drawn out upon Farm Field, under the command of colonel Ferrer and majors Lidcote and Temple, for the purpose of covering the retreat of the infantry—about as dispiriting a service as a soldier can be engaged in. The advanced guard of the royalists emerged from Bodicote about seven in the morning; but a smart charge headed by major Temple drove that division back upon the main body. The earl of Northampton meanwhile deployed his troopers into the line, whilst his light field pieces kept pouring their round shot into the puritan squadrons. The alignment complete, on came the cavaliers at a hand gallop; and the troopers of the parliament, knowing from the first that

it was a hopeless affair, wavered in their ranks, faced about, and finally made off to the northward as fast as possible. They attempted, indeed, to make a stand a short way south from Hanwell; but colonel Webb, having made the circuit of Crouch hill with the Oxford horse, poured in upon their flanks, whilst lord Northampton with the main body charged them in front. The conflict was short, sharp, and decisive; for colonel Ferrer fell mortally wounded, and his men once more sought safety in flight, nor again drew bridle till they were beyond Edge Hill.

Colonel Gage's infantry, two squadrons of horse, and Sir William Compton with the garrison of the castle, set off in pursuit of colonel Fiennes and the foot; but the latter had got too good a start for the infantry to come up with them, and by prudently disposing his skirmishers behind the hedge-rows with which the country was intersected, the parliamentary leader was enabled to keep the royal horsemen at bay, and to withdraw his troops with but little loss. On the king's side, lieut-colonel Smith and captains Butler and Brown were slain, whilst the earl of Brainford and colonel Webb were severely wounded. On the side of the parliament, colonel Ferrer was the only officer of note who fell, but captain Unitt and about eighty troopers were taken prisoners; whilst two hundred horses, a field piece, a waggon-load of arms, and a tolerable supply of ammunition became the prey of the conquerors.

Thus ended the first siege of Banbury castle, on the 25th of October, 1644, after the town had been beleaguered for three months, and the fortress closely invested for two. During the whole of this period, the garrison bravely held out, although

surrounded on all sides by a hostile population, and subjected to great privations for want of the commonest necessaries of life. Whatever views the reader may entertain with respect to the cause in which these men were engaged, he cannot withhold his meed of approbation from the gallantry with which they maintained their position, amid the battering of cannon, the bursting of bombs, the midnight surprise, and the assault of the morning.

CHAPTER XIV.

Second Liege of the Castle.

Honouring the Brave.—The Kilsby Foray.—The Attack on Compton Winyates.—Fortifying the Castle.—Demoralization of the Royalists.—The Battle of Naseby.—Colonel Whalley lays siege to Banbury Castle.—His Progress in the Work.—The Parliamentarians are successful throughout the Country.—The King surrenders to the Scots, and the Castle to the Commonwealth.—Terms of Capitulation.

OR the services which he had rendered to the king's cause at Banbury, colonel Gage received the honour of knighthood at the hand of his majesty; Sir William Compton was thanked in royal orders; and there is no doubt that colonel Green would also have received some distinguished mark of the royal favour, but worn out by anxiety of mind and fatigue of body, exhausted nature gave way, and he was carried to his long home in Christmas week. On the other side, the widow of colonel Ferrer was voted a pension by parliament, and the troops of colonel Fiennes got a fortnight's pay.

On the night of Thursday, the 9th of January, 1645, Sir William Compton made a foray as far as Kilsby in Northamptonshire, the inhabitants having flatly refused to furnish the customary contributions to the royal cause. He took with him a regiment of horse, and brought two dozen of the villagers prisoners to Banbury. The foragers also drove off a considerable number of horses, together with a great many head of cattle and sheep, besides carrying away every valuable article on which they could lay their hands. Nor did Sir William give up his prisoners and his plunder until the Kilsby ladies paid down the sum of £300.

Whilst the castle of Banbury, which had long been considered the property of lord Saye and Sele, was thus so gallantly held out for the king, the fortified mansion of Compton Winyates, the family seat of the earl of Northampton, was garrisoned on behalf of the parliament with a strong detachment of troops under the command of major Purefoy. Sir William Compton, having ascertained from the scouts that three hundred of the men belonging to the garrison of Compton house were then absent upon special service, resolved on the hazardous attempt of taking the remainder by surprise, and if possible, of recovering his paternal home. On the 29th of January, shortly after midnight, with about three hundred cavalry and two hundred infantry, he silently approached the outworks of the mansion, and then gave orders for the assault to take place. The sentries were cut down at their posts, the half-moon breastwork defending the draw-bridge was carried, the ropes were cut by which the bridge was raised, down came the structure with a thundering sound, and the royalists were soon in possession of the stables, the brewhouse, and other offices.

The drums beat to arms, and each man in the garrison was quickly at his post, except about thirty who slept in the stable lofts and were consequently taken prisoners. hundred of the assailants had forced their way into the great court, where they were charged by the enemy in close order, and as their ranks were in some confusion, the puritans succeeded in driving them back, upon the stables and barns. Another well directed charge on the part of the garrison recovered possession of the draw-bridge, which they succeeded in raising, and thus cut off the communication between the royalists within the walls and those who remained without. Thrice did Sir William Compton attempt to regain the bridge and the adjoining outworks; but thrice was he driven off with considerable loss. Inside the premises, all was in confusion; for as the puritans recovered possession of the upper stories of the offices, the royalists set fire to the combustibles below, and as the flames spread rapidly, the assailants began to be inspired with fresh hopes. A trumpet from without summoned the garrison to surrender; but the commandant ordered the bearer at his peril to be gone, and collecting all his forces, he once more charged those who had gained a footing in the offices, and succeeded in taking a good many prisoners, as well as in rescuing such of his own men as had been captured by the royalists at the beginning of the fray. The king's party lost about eighty in killed and wounded, whilst the parliamentary loss was comparatively trifling, and Sir William Compton again retired upon his stronghold at Banbury.

The royalists immediately set about fortifying the castle, and as at the former siege, hunger had been their most formidable enemy, they did not neglect on this occasion to lay in a good store of wholesome provender. A large supply of broad cloth was captured at Halford on the 6th of March, on its way from Gloucester to Warwick, and the seasonable prize was brought into Banbury by Sir Charles Compton, along with the seventy pack horses employed in its conveyance. Numerous working parties were daily employed in strengthening the fortifications of the castle, and strong bulwarks were erected on its most vulnerable points. The ditches were deepened, bastions constructed, and every thing was done that could possibly add to the strength of the fortress. It is now that the incompetent commanders of the parliamentary armies drop off one by one, and their places are bestowed on men better qualified for the stern task which they have taken in hand. It is now that the chivalry of the royalists is found ebbing away, and all that is virtuous and good in their cause is seen rapidly festering into corruption. The want of regular pay gives rise to a system of licence and plunder, which is carried to a pitch of great enormity, and renders the armies of the king fully as formidable to his friends as to his foes; so that when the cavaliers meet the puritans on the field of Naseby, on the 14th of June, 1645, they only take up a position from which they are driven in absolute, utter, and irremediable defeat.

During the remainder of that year, matters continued with but little change, either in the town or neighbourhood of Banbury. There were occasional skirmishes with varied suc-

cess, and the farmers were harassed with the foragers on both sides. Now it was the parliamentarians requiring stores, and now the royalists demanding supplies. In the town itself, many houses had been burned or pulled down, and most of the peacefully-disposed inhabitants had taken their departure, finding neither peace nor quietness within its walls. But in the month of January, 1646, colonel Whalley arrived in Banbury with a strong division, bent on the reduction of the stubborn fortress, of which Sir William Compton still had the command. The first point to which colonel Whalley directed his attention, was the protection of his men against attacks from without. For this purpose, strong breastworks were thrown up commanding every entrance to the town, and a line of earthworks connected the whole. The garrison numbered only three hundred men, whilst the assailants were at least four to one, so that little danger was dreaded from the sorties of the garrison. Captain Hooper, an engineer officer of some experience, marked out the trenches, and all ranks in the service of the parliament laboured most assiduously for the reduction of the place. Steadily did the four trenches progress towards the castle, artillery being the only arm of the service in which the besiegers were deficient, and this want was promised soon to be supplied.

In the course of a month, the parallels had been advanced to within pistol-shot of the works; but Sir William Compton was not the man to allow himself to be so closely cooped up without taking advantage of every opportunity which presented itself for annoying the assailants and retarding their progress. Accordingly, many were the sorties made by the garrison, and

numerous were the surprises which they essayed; but by the exercise of due vigilance on the part of the besiegers, these sallies were invariably repulsed. On the 8th of March, colonel Whalley summoned the garrison to surrender; but Sir William replied that he would never be so false to his king as to deliver up his trust to rebels, and declared that every officer and soldier in the garrison would rather lose their lives in defence of the castle than deliver it up without his majesty's command. The parliamentary officer, at a latter date, assured his gallant opponent that the fortunes of the king were sunk so low, that it would be impossible for him to send succours to Banbury, and further to prolong the defence would only be to imbrue their hands in their own blood.

It would be but a thrice-told tale to relate, how defeat had followed upon the heels of defeat. How Fairfax retook Leicester and then hurried to the west, where he drove Goring from before the walls of Taunton, which was being reduced to great extremity. How prince Rupert surrendered Bristol to his arms, which so enraged the king that he recalled all his commissions, and sent him a passport to leave the kingdom. Charles was defeated at Chester; the Scots took Carlisle; Cromwell captured Devizes; Winchester capitulated; Dartmouth was taken by storm, and the surrender of Exeter completed the conquest of the west. Montrose was defeated by Leslie at Philiphaugh, and lord Astley taken prisoner at Stowe, when he said to the parliamentary commander, "you have now done your work and may go to play, unless you choose to fall out among yourselves."

King Charles, finding his affairs thus desperate, determined

to surrender himself to the Scottish army, which was then besieging Newark, and on the night of the 27th of April, riding before a portmanteau as a gentleman's servant, he left Oxford in the company of Dr. Hudson and Mr. Ashburnham. His reception by his countrymen was not such as to flatter his vanity, for the presbyterian preachers insulted him to his face; and one of them, after reproaching him with his misgovernment, directed the psalm to be sung:

"Why dost thou, tyrant, boast thyself, Thy wicked deeds to praise?"

On which the king stood up and requested the congregation to sing the psalm beginning with the words,

"Have mercy, Lord, on me, I pray; For men would me devour."

The good-natured congregation, sympathising with his majesty, sung the psalm which he requested, and left the preacher to mutter his maledictions to himself. All hope of succour for the beleaguered garrison of Banbury was now at an end; and accordingly on the 5th of May, fifteen weeks from the commencement of the siege, articles of capitulation were agreed to. These were as honourable to the besiegers as the besieged, and show the respect which brave men will ever entertain towards a gallant although fallen foe. Sir William Compton the governor, Sir Spencer Compton his brother, together with the officer next in command, were to retain their arms, a servant and two horses each, and to be allowed to depart wherever they thought proper. Every captain was to retain his horse and sword, and all subalterns were to be privileged to wear their side arms, the privates to march out unarmed, but

all were to be allowed to keep their clothes and one half of their money, whilst every officer and private was to be furnished with a free pass to any place which he might select in England or Wales, together with free quarters on his route. Accommodation was to be provided in the town for the sick and wounded, who were still to be attended by their own surgeons; and when sufficiently recovered, they were to be provided with like passports as the others. On these conditions, the castle with all its stores was rendered up on the morning of the 8th, the garrison marching out with the honours of war, and having piled their arms at the half-moon battery in front of the draw-bridge, they were cordially welcomed by those who had been so recently their bitter enemies.

There were found in the fortress, ten or eleven pieces of cannon, four hundred stand of arms, nine sets of colours, a dozen barrels of gunpowder with a suitable supply of bullets and match, abundance of salt beef and biscuit, hundreds of quarters of wheat and malt, twenty live bullocks, and three-score sheep. It thus appears that the garrison was well provided for a siege, and in all likelihood, colonel Whalley would not have gained possession of the stronghold without much risk and some loss. The news of the fall of Banbury castle was welcomed by parliament with great joy. The sum of £100 was voted to colonel Whalley for conducting the siege, and £30 to the messenger for bringing the news, whilst a day of thanksgiving was appointed in honour of the event.

CHAPTER XV.

Uneasy lies the Head that wears a Crown.

Damage sustained by the Townsmen in the Siege.—The King given up to the Parliamentary Commissioners.—Demolition of the Castle.—Parish Matters.—The Commission at Newport.—Pride's Purge.—The King's Trial and Execution.—The Battles of Dunbar and Worcester.—The Levellers.—The Barebones Parliament.—Estimate of Royal Property in Banbury.—The Protectorate.—Cromwell and the Franchise.—Mr. Fiennes a Privy Councillor.—Richard Cromwell succeeds his Father.—General Monk's Movements.—The Restoration.

AR is such a desperate game that even the winners are invariably losers; and although, in that fearful domestic struggle of which we have sketched the outline, the cause that had been so ardently embraced by the majority of the inhabitants of Banbury was at length triumphant, yet at how a tremendous a cost had the victory been achieved! The town was depopulated and almost in ruins. Many of the houses had been destroyed for the purpose of strengthening the defences of the castle; numbers of others had been removed in consequence of their having obstructed the view from the besiegers' batteries; not a few had been pulled down, the materials having been required for constructing the extensive works erected for the reduction of the fortress; whilst nearly all the houses in the town had suffered more or less from the continued cannonade of the two sieges. In such a state of things, private property invariably suffers, and owners or occupiers are but little regarded in the deadly struggle of the

combatants for victory. To repair the damages, sequestered timber to the value of £300 was voted by parliament in the following July; but as this was lying in a wood near Oxford, it was considered that the cost of conveyance would be a heavy sum, so the mayor and corporation were empowered to sell the timber in question, and with the purchase money to procure materials nearer home.

The king was strictly guarded by the Scots, although treated with every form of outward respect. They required him to give orders to the garrisons which still held out for his cause to lay down their arms; and as he was sensible that a prolonged resistance would be to little purpose, he yielded to the desire with a good grace. Oxford surrendered; lord Ormond yielded up Dublin castle; Newark was delivered over to the Scots; the marquis of Montrose laid down his arms. The veteran marquis of Worcester, although eighty-four years of age, was the last who submitted to parliamentary authority, and until the following August, long after all other opposition had ceased, he refused to open the gates of Raglan castle. Lengthened conferences took place between the parliamentary and Scottish leaders, the former claiming that the king's person should be delivered up to them-insisting that as he had surrendered in England, he could only be considered within the jurisdiction of that kingdom, and could not be disposed of by a foreign although friendly power. To their shame be it spoken, the northern commanders consented to deliver up their prize, on condition that the sum of £400,000, which was claimed as arrears of pay for their army, should be handed over from the treasury—one half of the sum to be

paid down at once, and the remainder in two equal instalments. In 1647, according to the compact, the king was delivered up to the parliamentary commissioners, of whom John Crewe, Esq. M.P. for Brackley was one, and they removed him to Holdenby house in the county of Northampton, where he was seized by cornet Joyce on the 3rd of June, and carried to the head quarters of the army. Some time afterwards, he was established in his palace at Hampton court, whence in consequence of threats of personal violence, he fled to the Isle of Wight, where he was again treated as a prisoner.

When Banbury castle was surrendered to the parliamentary troops, a committee of the house of commons was appointed for the purpose of ascertaining whether or not it would be for the public interest that the fortress should be dismantled; and statements having been submitted to the committee, that during the civil wars, the stronghold in question had been a source of continued annoyance and severe oppression both to the inhabitants of the town and the residents in the neighbourhood, they reported in 1648, that the public advantage required it to be demolished, and the materials might be applied to repairing or rebuilding the houses in the town. A resolution to that effect passed both houses of parliament; and a vote was agreed to that the sum of £2000 should be given as a compensation to lord Saye and Sele for the damage that would thus be inflicted on his property. Of that sum, £800 was to be charged upon the sequestered estates of royalists in the county of Oxford, and £600 upon those in each of the counties of Northampton and Warwick. Pick-axe and gunpowder did their destructive work right speedily, and the soil that had

been watered with the blood of heroes came to be devoted to the ignoble purposes of a cabbage garden—the spot where warriors fought and fell has been converted into a coal wharf, echoing to the strokes of the lime-burner's hammer. All that is left of the stubborn fortress is its noble name, the two cottages in the gardens, and an ancient storehouse on the castle wharf. The vicarage house, the old gaol on the south side of the market place, the old workhouse in South Bar street, and several shops and dwelling-houses throughout the town, were all erected with the materials which the demolition of the castle placed at the disposal of the inhabitants.

In 1647, an ordinance passed both houses of parliament, augmenting the temporalities of the vicarage by £48 a year, to be paid from a fund which had hitherto been reserved to the Bishop of Oxford from the impropriate rectory of Banbury, together with £2 a year from the rectory of Cropredy. reason assigned was that the emoluments of the vicar were usually small in amount; and in consequence of the widespread distress occasioned by the civil war, of which the inhabitants had their full share, they were unable to contribute as formerly towards the temporal comforts of their spiritual pastor. In 1648, the Rev. Samuel Wells was inducted to the vicarage, a puritan divine of the presbyterian school, who subsequently published an able though ineffectual protest against the trial and execution of the king, in which he reminded the rulers that when the ten tribes of Israel forsook their king, they also forgot their God, and their future lot as a nation was embittered with every temporal and spiritual calamity.

In the month of September, 1648, fifteen commissioners were sent to Newport in the Isle of Wight, furnished by parliament with full powers, and whose instructions were that, if possible, they should come to some arrangement with the captive king. Five peers and ten commoners composed the commission, lord Saye and Sele being one of the former. For two long months did the discussion continue; and although Charles was refused the assistance of counsel, yet by his own powers of reasoning alone, was he enabled to maintain his position against fifteen of the ablest statesmen of the age. Not only so, but he also succeeded in disarming at least some among their number of the bitter hostility with which they had hitherto regarded him. Civil commotions were meanwhile subdued, and the king was again seized by the commanders of the army, who caused him to be carried a close prisoner to Hurst castle. For this act of usurpation, Holles proposed in the house of commons that the generals should be proclaimed traitors to the state, and that view of the matter was ably supported by the honourable Nathaniel Fiennes, who still retained his seat as member for Banbury. The house of commons was then surrounded by the army; yet after a three days' debate, they passed a resolution that the king's concessions at Newport formed a basis on which they might proceed to the settlement of the kingdom. This was followed next day by "colonel Pride's purge," when that officer beset every avenue leading to the house, expelled one hundred and sixty of the presbyterian members, and committed forty-one others to a brief imprisonment, among which latter number was the member for Banbury. The army was now the leading power

in the state—only sixty or seventy members of the commons being left, for the enactment of laws or the transaction of business, a body termed in derision "the rump parliament." On the 4th of January, 1649, this remnant of a legislature adopted an ordinance for the trial of the king; a lawyer named Bradshaw was appointed president of his judges, and Coke was employed to conduct the prosecution as solicitor for "the people of England."

Now transpired a spectacle unprecedented in the annals of any land. The chief magistrate of a mighty nation was arraigned as a traitor at the bar of his subjects. He was accused of misgovernment and breach of trust; but he protested against the authority of the court, and refused to submit to its jurisdiction. The members of the tribunal over-ruled the objection and declared themselves delegated by the people, the only legitimate source of power. Thrice was the scene repeated; and on the fourth day, the 27th of January, witnesses were examined to prove what every body knew, that the king had appeared in arms, and Charles I. was doomed to die. On the 30th, he walked from the window of Whitehall to the scaffold; with the words on his lips, "I go from a corruptible to an incorruptible crown," he knelt down by the block; with one blow of his axe, the masked executioner left the body a headless trunk. In what was called "the first year of freedom" the king's statue in the Exchange was thrown down, and on the pedestal was carved, "the tyrant departsthe last of the kings."

The prince of Wales was immediately proclaimed in Scotland under the title of Charles II. and he accordingly took shelter

with the Scottish army, but with little more than the semblance of power. Cromwell, having reduced to obedience the disaffected in Ireland, turned his arms against the Scots, whom he routed at Dunbar on the 3rd of September, 1650, and again at Worcester on that day twelvemonth. Meanwhile there had been some disturbances in Banbury and other parts of Oxfordshire, occasioned by "the levellers," whose opinions of "possessing the land" had been widely diffused throughout the army of the commonwealth. A corporal Thompson took an active part in the propagation of these doctrines, and fixed his head quarters in Banbury, where he was defeated by colonel Reynolds and his men dispersed. With a few of his more zealous adherents, he fled to Burford, where he was joined by about four thousand others, holding similar opinions to his own. Here he was attacked and routed by Cromwell, and was subsequently shot in the neighbourhood of Wellingborough.

Affairs of state were now carried on with a high hand by "the rump;" but being about to reduce the number of the army and thus weaken the power of its commanders, Cromwell dissolved the house on the 20th of April, 1653, thus annihilating a power "which had filled all Europe with the renown of its actions, and with astonishment at the extent of its crimes." He then summoned a new assembly consisting of a hundred and thirty-nine members, in whose appointment the voice of the people was not even pretended to be consulted, and from the name of one of its members, this body was denominated "the Barebones parliament." It met on the 4th of July, and shortly afterwards passed an act directing

the sale of the royal property. A survey of the late king's possessions in Banbury was accordingly made, and the commissioners enumerate fifteen houses or tenements in Sheep street, or that portion of High street between the White Lion and the cross, estimated at a yearly rental of £43; eight houses in South Bar street, of the annual value of £15 17s.; and a piece of building land for two houses calculated at 20s. a year; property in the Cow Fair at £10 12s.; two houses in West Bar street at £2 each; one in Broad street at £4; two shops in Butcher row, £3; a tenement in Church lane, £2; with other detached property of lesser value, making the whole of his late majesty's possessions in the borough amount to upwards of £90 a year. The only other act passed by the Barebones parliament was one which declared marriage a civil contract, to be performed by a civil magistrate, without the interposition of any clergyman; and from the close of that year to the period of the restoration, banns of matrimony were published in Banbury market-place on Thursdays, instead of in the church as appointed by the rubric.

This apology for a parliament tendered its resignation on the 12th of December; and shortly afterwards, by a decree of a council of officers, Cromwell was raised to the dignity of "protector of the commonwealth." A parliament was summoned to meet in September, 1654; but no writ was issued for the smaller boroughs, and consequently no representative was returned for Banbury either in this or the ensuing parliament. Cromwell's admirers represent him as an unswerving advocate of liberty; but although he abolished vassalage, he was certainly no friend to an "extension of the

suffrage," for he admitted none to the exercise of the franchise unless possessed of an estate of £200. Nathaniel Fiennes was returned member for the county of Oxford, and rose high in the protector's favour—a circumstance which speaks volumes in his praise, for it is well known that Cromwell raised none to office, without their possessing the requisite degree of merit. Mr. Fiennes was not only a member of the privy council, but also one of the lords commissioners entrusted with the great seal, and speaker of the upper house which the protector had established in imitation of the former house of lords. Office had also been offered to lord Saye and Sele; but he declined the honour, and retired to the isle of Lundy in the Bristol channel. The parliament was not found so submissive as Cromwell expected, and he dissolved it on the 22nd of January, 1655.

A new house was summoned in the following year, and Mr. Fiennes was elected for the university of Oxford; but the majority was still far from pliant, and the protector set guards upon the doors, who were to permit none to enter the halls of the legislature except such as could produce a passport from the council. The members offered Cromwell the crown in 1657, which after some hesitation he thought proper to refuse. In 1658, parliament was again dissolved, the members showing a desire of abridging the exorbitant powers of the protector. In the autumn of that year, he was attacked with tertian ague, and on the 3rd of September, the anniversary of the battles of Worcester and Dunbar, the iron head of Cromwell was laid low in the dust.

His son Richard now succeeded to the protectorate, and a

new parliament was summoned to meet in January, 1659, in which Nathaniel Fiennes, jun., son of the lord commissioner, was returned member for Banbury. The power of Richard Cromwell was but brief in its duration: for on the 22nd of April, in consequence of a cabal among the officers of the army, he was induced to lay down an authority which he had not sufficient firmness to wield. The "rump parliament" was recalled by a council of general officers, and on the 13th of October was displaced again by the same military power. A committee of safety was appointed by the generals on the 26th, to be supplanted by the twice-expelled "rump" in two months afterwards. On the 3rd of February, 1660, general Monk entered London with the army he had so successfully commanded both in Ireland and Scotland, and was introduced to the miniature parliament on the 6th. The members who had been expelled by "Pride's purge" were restored on the 21st, and by their authority a free house of commons was summoned, in which Sir Anthony Cope of Hanwell was returned for Banbury, and which soon after its assembling on the 25th of April, voted for the restoration of the king with unanimity and zeal.



CHAPTER XVI.

The Restoration of the Stuarts.

The Welcome Home.—The Exodus of 1652.—Whig and Tory.—Surrender of the Charters.—King James II.—The Lord Keeper.—Restoration of the Charters.—William and Mary.—A contested Election.—Queen Anne.—The few leading Events of her reign.

HE crowded thoroughfares of London rung with tumultuous applause, as on his majesty's birthday—the 29th of May-king Charles II. returned to the metropolis for the purpose of ascending the vacant throne. So hearty was the welcome, that he said it must have been his own fault that he had not sooner returned to take possession, since every one was so zealous in promoting his restoration. He showed considerable judgment in the appointment of his ministers-Hyde earl of Clarendon being chancellor and premier, the duke of Ormond steward of the household, lord Saye privy seal, the earl of Manchester lord chamberlain, the earl of Southampton high treasurer, Sir Edward Nicholas secretary of state, and the Rev. Richard Baxter as one of his most thoroughgoing chaplains, who did not fail to remind his royal master of his sins. An act of indemnity was passed which embraced within its scope all that had taken part in the civil war, excepting those who had participated in the late king's execution. Of these, some were led forth to public execution, and the remainder dispersed in several prisons throughout the country. The army was disbanded, with the exception of a thousand cavalry and four thousand infantry, to take charge of a few garrisons and form a body-guard for the king; yet this small and unimportant force was the starting point of our present standing army.

In 1661, John Crewe, Esq. M.P. for Brackley, for his services in bringing about the restoration, was raised to the peerage as baron Crewe of Steane, an honour which he enjoyed for eighteen years. By a parliament which met on the 8th of May in that year, and in which Sir John Holman of Warkworth was member for Banbury, the bishops were restored to their seats in the house of lords, and the corporation act was passed, by which nonconformists were virtually excluded from participating in the management of municipal affairs. On the 14th of April, 1662, the venerable lord Saye and Sele, at the age of eighty, peacefully succumbed to the last enemy of man, and a nobler patriot never laid his honoured head in the dust. Friend and foe alike bear testimony to his firmness, his moderation, his clear insight of men and things, and the unspotted truthfulness which marked his character.

In the course of the same year, the act of uniformity became law, requiring that all clergymen should declare their assent to every thing contained in the book of common prayer, and take the oath of canonical obedience. They were allowed until Bartholomew's day to make up their minds, and the Rev. Samuel Wells, vicar of Banbury, resolved to throw his emoluments to the winds rather than subscribe the required declaration. He preached his farewell sermon from the words, "And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit to Jerusalem, not knowing the things which shall befall me there." He con-

tinued, however, to reside in the town for the next three years. when the stringent law called the "five mile act" compelled him to take up his abode at Deddington. A like course was followed by the ministers of Aynho, Bloxham, and Broughton, not one of whom would subscribe the articles. Whilst sympathising with these two thousand men who thus gave up the comforts of life that they might adhere to principles dear to their hearts, it must not be forgotten that in the days when their partisans were in power, a still larger number of episcopalian clergymen were expelled from their livings at a much shorter notice. In 1664, at the very time when prejudice ran high against dissent and its adherents, the foundation stone of the first non-conforming place of worship in Banbury was laid -the modest and unassuming meeting-house of the society of Friends—not indeed the building in which they now assemble, but one which was erected on the same spot.

The rupture with Holland in 1664, and that with France and Denmark in the following year, present us with no materials for our local record; nor need allusion be made to the disgrace at Chatham, when the Dutch admiral De Wit sailed up the Medway in 1667, and succeeded in burning so many of our vessels in the harbour. Passing over the persecutions of the Scottish covenanters, the absurdities of the "revelations" of Oates and Bedloe, and the judicial murders consequent thereon, we arrive at the year 1678, when parliament was dissolved, there having been no general election for the space of seventeen years. But if the duration of that parliament was long, the existence of the next was sufficiently short; for it met on the 6th of March, 1679, and was dis-

solved on the 10th of the following July. Party spirit now ran high, and the terms Whig and Tory owe their origin to this date. Parliament was again summoned on the 21st of October, 1680, and both in this assembly and the last, Sir John Holman was returned for Banbury. Two more dissolutions rapidly followed, and still the borough returned the same representative. On the second of these occasions, the parliament met at Oxford, and both the court party and that of the country brought with them strong bodies of their servants and retainers, thus bearing little resemblance to an English parliament. The Puritans wished to pass a bill excluding the duke of York, the king's brother, from succeeding to the crown—a measure which his majesty strenuously resisted, and after violent altercations, the house was dissolved.

In 1682, the king contrived, with the assistance of the lord mayor of London, to deprive the liverymen of one of their ancient privileges, that of electing both their sheriffs; when the corporation demurred, a writ of quo warranto was issued, and venal judges declared the charter invalid. Nearly all the other corporations in England, bearing in mind what had occurred in the metropolis, were induced to surrender their charters into the king's hands. Banbury followed the example, and the important documents that had been granted to the borough by Mary and James were now delivered up to the sovereign by the subservient corporation. A new charter was granted, extending the jurisdiction of the borough to the whole parish, including the hamlets forming the non-corporate portions of the present parliamentary borough. The charter, however, retained to his majesty greater powers than hereto-

fore, and placed the liberties of the burgesses more at his disposal. No mayor or recorder was to be admitted to office who had not received the king's approval, and if the corporation should twice in succession nominate individuals distasteful to his majesty, he was empowered to appoint a fitting person to the office. A considerable sum was paid for this renewal and extension of the corporate privileges, although from an informality attending the enrolment, the ancient charters came to be subsequently acted upon.

The Rye-house plot succeeded this achievement of the party of the court, and that was avenged by the execution of lord Russell, Algernon Sydney, colonel Walcot, and others who had taken part in the conspiracy. Anne the king's niece married prince George of Denmark in 1684, his majesty hoping that by this alliance he might be able to secure the goodwill of his protestant subjects. In 1685, he was seized with an apoplectic attack, and expired on the 6th of February, having carried on the affairs of the state, for the last four years of his reign, without the aid or interference of any parliament. His character was not inappropriately summed up in the well-known adage, "He never said a foolish thing, and never did a wise one."

James II. now ascended the throne thus vacant through the decease of his elder brother, and although the new king made many professions of moderation, his actions were not quite so constitutional as his promises had led the nation to hope. The customs and excise had only been granted to the late king for life; but James ordered them by proclamation to be levied as before. He went openly to mass, and sent Caryl to

Rome to make his submission to the pope, and to clear the way for the re-admission of England into the catholic church. But the principal offices in the state were still held by protestants, the great seal continuing to be entrusted to Baron Guilford of Wroxton, second son of the fourth lord North. This important post in the government was confided to him in 1682, after he had passed through the comparatively subaltern departments of solicitor and attorney-general. It was whilst he held the former of these offices, that he espoused the lady Frances Pope, and thus succeeded to the possession of the Wroxton estate.

The general election occurred in April, and the influence of the court preponderating in the corporation, Sir Dudley North, the lord keeper's brother, was returned as member for Banbury. Monmouth's rebellion was suppressed and followed by his execution; whilst an insurrection in Scotland, headed by Argyle, was also soon got under, and its leader sent to the scaffold. In consequence of repeated instances of disagreement with the crown, parliament was prorogued five times in the course of two years, and there being no prospect of a better understanding, it was dissolved.

Lord Guilford's health declined, and he was recommended by his physicians to try his native air; but neither that nor the waters of Astrop seem to have had any effect upon his constitution, for he succumbed to his malady on the 5th of September, 1685, and his remains were consigned to their last resting-place in Wroxton church. In 1687, his majesty paid a brief visit to Banbury, and "touched" sundry persons afflicted with those scrofulous tumours popularly known as

"the king's evil;" but how far the patients were benefited by the royal manipulation, is a secret that has not been unfolded. The year 1688 was noted for the trial and acquittal of the six bishops, and for sundry attempts on the part of the king to bring about the restoration of the Roman catholic faith. William prince of Orange, his majesty's son-in-law and nephew, assented to the free toleration of all forms of religion, but privately gave the protestants every assurance of his favour and regard. The rival parties in the state laid aside their animosity and looked to William as their sole protector. Preparations were quietly made in Holland for the invasion of England, and Louis of France offered to assist king James with both an army and a fleet, but the proposal was respectfully declined. Finding, however, that dis-satisfaction, discontent, and distrust were almost universally prevalent throughout the nation—the Roman catholic party forming the sole exception -and having been informed by his ambassador at the court of Holland that he might daily expect the long projected invasion, the king began to retrace his steps. He replaced the justices of the peace whom he had caused to be deposed; he abolished the high court of commission; he restored the expelled president of Magdalen college, Oxford; nay, he even condescended to fawn upon the bishops whom he had so lately prosecuted. The ancient charters of London and other corporations were restored to them under the plea that the surrender had not been recorded, and thus the inhabitants of Banbury recovered possession of those documents, by which the town had been raised to the dignity of a royal borough. It is true, that by the restoration of the ancient charters, the

incorporated bounds of the borough were again sadly diminished; but the corporation gained, in the powers of self-government, more than an equivalent for what it lost in extent of territory.

All these concessions, however, came too late. On the 5th of November, the prince of Orange landed at Torquay with an army of fourteen thousand men, and all England was speedily in commotion. In Cheshire, lord Delamere took arms for the prince; the governor of Plymouth declared for the same cause; the earl of Danby took possession of York in his name; the counties of Derby and Nottingham rose to his assistance. Deserted by those in whom he reposed the most unbounded confidence—abandoned even by his own family—the king, in despair, threw up the reins of government and fled to France, leaving the management of their affairs to his subjects. convention met in London on the 22nd of January, 1689, in which Banbury was represented by Sir Robert Dashwood of Wykham, and a resolution was agreed to in that assembly, that as the king had deserted his trust, he should be considered to have abdicated, and that the crown should be offered to William and Mary.

Thus, the maxim of absolute hereditary right was utterly abrogated, and an acknowledgment made that the people had the power to set a ruler aside. The new sovereigns confirmed all protestants in the offices which they held, and proceeded with the reconstruction of the ministry. The convention was converted into a parliament, and on the 11th of April, the double coronation was solemnised at Westminster. James landed in Ireland; Londonderry stood out against him and

was relieved after the garrison had been reduced to the greatest straits; he summoned a parliament to meet in Dublin; the duke of Schomberg landed an army at Carrickfergus and reduced both it and Belfast to obedience. The English parliament met on the 19th of October, Sir Robert Dashwood attending it as member for Banbury, and the house was dissolved on the 6th of February, 1690, the new parliament being summoned for the 20th of March.

A contested election took place in Banbury on the 24th of February, the burgesses at large insisting on their right to a vote in the return of the member for the borough. A hundred and forty freemen tendered their suffrages for John Hawkes, Esq., but the mayor refused to receive them, on the ground that the power of election was vested solely in the corporation, which again returned Sir Robert Dashwood as their representative. This return was petitioned against by the supporters of Mr. Hawkes, and the enquiry was referred to a committee of the house of commons, which after spending nearly two years in looking into precedents, examining witnesses, and listening to the arguments of counsel on both sides, came to the conclusion that Sir Robert Dashwood was duly elected, and that the franchise rested with the corporation alone.

On the 12th of July, the decisive battle of the Boyne placed the crown securely on king William's brow, and James retired to his former residence in France. The subsequent proceedings of the king in Ireland and on the continent are not of sufficient interest to entitle them to a place in our local record; but it is enough to say that prudence regulated his majesty's actions, and he was enabled to steer the vessel of the state clear of all the rocks and quicksands which lay in his way. Queen Mary expired in the sixth year of her reign, after which her husband reigned alone. A new parliament was summoned to meet on the 22nd of November, 1695, and Sir Robert Dashwood was again elected. This parliament lasted little more than two years, and the fourth house of commons in the reign of king William was called on to assemble on the 6th of February, 1698. The spirit of faction then run high, the contending parties being nearly equal balanced, and the bribery of electors was unprecedently great. In a small constituency like the Banbury corporation, disbursements from a heavy purse, judiciously applied, had a wonderful influence in deciding a contest, and James Isaacson, Esq., a London stockbroker, was returned as their representative. He was, however, soon afterwards expelled, and Sir John Cope was returned in his stead. The abdicated king James now expired at St. Germain's, and his son was acknowledged as king of England by the kings of France and Spain, the duke of Savoy, and the Pope; but none of these took any steps to restore him to the throne. Nor did king William long survive his father-in-law and rival, for he expired of diarrhoa on the 8th of March, 1701, after a reign of thirteen years, a great part of which time he spent in arms upon the continent.

Queen Anne now took in hand the helm of state, and resolved to maintain the alliances which the king had formed. War with France was declared in the following May, and the earl of Marlborough was appointed to the command of the forces. Parliament was dissolved and a new house summoned, shortly after the accession of her majesty, in which Charles

North, Esq. son of the late lord keeper was returned as the sitting member for Banbury. The success which attended lord Marlborough's arms induced his sovereign to raise him to a dukedom, bestow upon him the manor of Woodstock, and erect the palace of Blenheim as a lasting memorial of a nation's gratitude.

Among the many local changes that had taken place, the celebrated grammar school of Banbury had long since disappeared, and a subscription was entered into by the inhabitants, to supply the want of a public seminary. The blue coat school was founded as the result of this subscription, in which reading, writing, arithmetic, and the church catechism were to be taught by the master, and sewing, spinning, and knitting, The salary of the former was to be by the mistress. £25 a year, and that of the latter one half of this amount. The children were to be provided with certain articles of wearing apparel, and two rooms over the borough gaol in the market place were fitted up for the reception of the pupils. The subscription was subsquently increased by several bequests from benevolent individuals, and for a hundred and ten years, successive generations continued to be taught in the same place.

The duke of Marlborough's victories on the continent of Europe were of such a character as to point him out to posterity as the most consummate warrior of any age, and the troops he commanded as the bravest of the brave. The victory of Blenheim was followed by storming the French lines in Brabant, and the enemy was again defeated at the battle of Ramillies. But the crimson-stained honours of war are less

glorious and enduring than the green trophies of peace, and all the victories of Marlborough sink into the shade when compared with the union of the two kingdoms, England and Scotland, and their legislatures amalgamated into one, an event which took place in November, 1707. The Tories succeeded to power, and the duke of Marlborough was dismissed from the command of the army, to which his grace of Ormond succeeded; but his ill fortune was as conspicuous as the good genius of his predecessor had shone in the ascendant, and a peace was concluded with France in 1713. In this year also, a new parliament was summoned on the 10th of December, in which Jonathan Cope, Esq., the presumed heir to the Hanwell estate, was returned as member for Banbury. Disagreements in the ministry broke out into an open rupture; and after a long attendance at a cabinet council, her majesty was seized with a lethargy, in which she continued to doze until the first of August, 1714, when she expired, having obtained the name of "the good queen Anne."



CHAPTER XVII.

The House of Brunswick. Georges K. II. and HIK.

The First of the Georges.—The Rebellion in the North.—Banbury forfeits its Charter.—A new one granted.—The King's Death.—George II.—The Annual Expences of State.—The Prince of Wales visits Wroxton.—The Rebellion of '45.—Murder in the Horse Fair.—Lord North.—High Price of Bread.—Sudden Death of the King.—Changes in the Government.—The Member for Banbury Prime Minister.—Lord Chatham and Junius.—The Culworth Thieves.—Destruction of the Old Church.—Princely Visits to Wroxton.—Two Kings Burgesses of Banbury.—Long Illness, and Death of the King.

EORGE I., great-grandson of James I. landed at Greenwich from his electoral dominions on the 17th of September, amid the loyal acclammations of his subjects. His broken English may almost be deemed prophetic, as he responded to the thrilling and oft-repeated hurrah by the wellmeant exclamation, "Good people! I am come for your good -for all your goods!" The Tories were now excluded from office, and the king was crowned on the 20th of October. A new parliament was summoned in the following March, in which Sir Jonathan Cope—he had in the interim been dubbed a baronet—was again chosen as member for Banbury. The most stringent laws were enacted against those who should espouse the cause of the Pretender, the son of the exiled James II., whose party had now gained large accessions to its numbers, from those who had been removed from the sunny side of the house.

On the 6th of September, 1715, the earl of Mar unfurled the standard of rebellion in Scotland, and Mr. Thomas Forster

summoned the north of England to arms in aid of the cause of the house of Stuart. The malcontents in the west had formed the design of surprising Bristol; but their secrets were discovered, and the leaders in that quarter were thrown into prison. The university and city of Oxford were kept in awe by the presence of large bodies of troops, and there appeared every prospect of another civil war. The insurgents in the north of England were headed by the earls of Derwentwater, Nithsdale, Winton, and Carnwath, the lord Kenmuir, and Mr. Forster already mentioned; but on the 12th of November, they were attacked by general Willis at Preston, and after a smart encounter, they surrendered at discretion on the following day. On the same day was fought the battle of Dumblane, between the earl of Mar and duke of Argyle, in which the right wing of each army drove off their opponents, and the victory on either side was very problematical.

But the star of king George continued in the ascendant, whilst that of legitimacy was soon found upon the wane; for although James himself landed at Peterhead on the 22nd of December, with only six gentlemen in his retinue, and joined lord Mar at Fetterosse where he was proclaimed king, yet on the advance of Argyle, his followers retreated, and the chevalier re-embarked at Montrose for the continent. Still the kingdom remained in a most unsettled state. Riots took place in many of the principal towns; for although a considerable number of the insurgent leaders had paid for their treason with the loss of their heads, yet what with "nonjurors" and "malcontents," there was still in the country a sufficiency of disaffected men to spread the principles of discontent and treason. On

the anniversary of the birth-day of the prince of Wales in 1716, there were serious riots in Oxford, and the officers of the regiment quartered in that city, assembled in honour of the occasion, were rather roughly treated by the mob. On the 1st Monday in September, when the corporation of Banbury were met for the election of the chief magistrate for the year, there were serious differences of opinion within the council, and tumultuous gatherings of the populace without, so that the assembly broke up at midnight without having made choice of When the recorder was about to hold his court of a mayor. quarter sessions in the following year, a writ of quo warranto was issued, and it was eventually decided in the court of king's bench, that the corporation having failed to comply with the requirements of the charter, that important document was rendered null and void.

A new charter was granted in 1718, naming the mayor, twelve aldermen, and six capital burgesses, who with the recorder and chamberlain were to form the common council. It ordered also that thirty assistant burgesses were to be elected, whose duty would be to aid the mayor in keeping order in the borough, and from among whom all vacancies were to be filled up. The recorder was empowered to try all persons charged with felony or other offences committed within the borough, and the corporation were authorised to erect a gallows within the borough bounds, and to hang thereon all "felons, murderers, or other malefactors," who should have transgressed the law within their jurisdiction.

In the same year, the duke of Ormond sailed from Cadiz with six thousand Spanish troops, and arms for double that number, in ten ships of war, for the purpose of raising another insurrection; but at Cape Finisterre, his fleet was disabled and separated in a gale, and only two frigates arrived in Scotland. The three hundred Spaniards took possession of the pass of Glenshiel, but surrendered on the approach of general Wightman with the troops of king George. This was followed by the bursting of the south sea bubble, which entailed misery and distress upon thousands who had ventured their all in the loudly-praised scheme, and were reduced to beggary and wretchedness in consequence of its failure.

The parliament which met on the 9th of October, 1762, and in which Mr. Cope of Hanwell represented Banbury, suspended the habeas corpus act for a whole year, and passed a law by which the sum of £100,000 was ordered to be levied upon the estates of the Roman catholics, towards defraying the expence incurred in suppressing the late commotions. On the 3rd of June, 1727, the king embarked at Greenwich for Holland, where he landed on the 7th, but on his way to Hanover was seized with paralysis, and expired at Osnaburg on the 11th of June.

George II. now ascended the throne, vacant through his father's decease, and a new parliament was summoned to meet on the 23rd of January, 1728. The hon. Francis North, son of the second earl of Guilford, was returned as member for Banbury, and as the Whigs were now in office, he took his seat in the opposition. The sum of four millions was voted for the expence of the year, including a standing army of 22,900 men, and a naval force of 15,000 seamen, £230,000 for the maintenance of 12,000 Hessians, a subsidy of £50,000

to the king of Sweden, and half that sum to the petty duke of Wolfenbuttle, who for this allowance, gravely guaranteed to keep the monarch of Great Britain on his throne. On the death of lord Guildford in 1729, a vacancy occurred in the representation of Banbury, the sitting member having succeeded to his late father's title and his seat in the house of peers, when Toby Chauncey, Esq. of Edgcote was returned by the corporation. He did not retain his honours long, for he died in March, 1733, when he was succeeded by a member of the family of Knollys, by courtesy styled viscount Wallingford, but who, had it not been for the mistake alluded to in page 116, might have succeeded to the earldom of Banbury. He was again returned at the general election in 1734, and continued to represent the borough until the period of his death -an event which occurred six years afterwards-when he was succeeded by Mr. William Moore. Frederick, prince of Wales, at this time paid a visit to lord North at Wroxton, and the event is commemorated by the obelisk erected in the park, which from the inscription appears to have been built by the express orders of his royal highness. Sir John Willes of Astrop was also at this period lord chief justice of the court of common pleas, and his son John succeeded Mr. Moore in the representation of Banbury.

But this brings us down to the rebellion of 1745, when on the 19th of August, the young pretender unfurled his father's standard in the wilds of Glensinnan, and was joined by many hardy sons of the mountain. King George was then absent on the continent of Europe, but he hurried home on receiving the startling intelligence. The marquis of Tullibardine, the duke of Perth, viscount Strathallan, lord Nairn, lord George Murray, and many others, had enrolled their men under the prince's banners. Perth opened its gates; the city of Edinburgh was taken by surprise; in ten short minutes the troops of Sir John Cope were utterly routed at the battle of Prestonpans, leaving five hundred dead upon the field. On the 6th of November, Charles entered England by the western border, and in three days, the castle of Carlisle surrendered to his arms. He arrived at Manchester on the 29th of the month, and the 4th of December found him at Derby. Disappointed of the succours he expected to join him, he then commenced his retreat into Scotland, defeated general Hawley at Falkirk on on the 17th of January, 1746, but was totally routed at Culloden on the 16th of April, and made his escape to France with very great difficulty.

On the 7th of March, 1746, a widow named Lydia Wild was inhumanly murdered in her own house in the Horse Fair, by a weaver named Parr, who, after fracturing her skull with a blow from a hammer, deliberately cut her throat. Detection, however, followed closely upon the committal of the crime, and it was seen that robbery had been the inducement for the horrid deed, as some £20 of the widow's money was found in his possession. He was tried before the recorder, by whom he was doomed to die, and his body to be hung in chains. The first part of the sentence was carried into effect in the Horse Fair, in front of the house where the murder was committed, and the gibbet where the remains were suspended was erected by the way-side leading from Broad street to Easington.

Parliament was dissolved in the month of June, 1747, and

Banbury was again represented by Mr. Willes of Astrop. At this time war was being vigorously carried on between this country and France, but was brought to a close in 1748 by the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle. This was followed, in two years afterwards, by the death of the prince of Wales, who was cut off in the prime of his manhood, and was deeply lamented by the nation at large. Parliament was dissolved in April, 1754, and a new one summoned, to which, at the age of twenty-two, lord North of Wroxton, eldest son of the earl of Guilford, was returned as member for Banbury, and continued its representative until 1790. There was at this time a severe contest for the county, which after a six days' poll terminated in favour of the Tory candidates lord Wenman and Sir James Dashwood; but on a scrutiny taking place, lord Parker and Sir Edmund Turner were declared to be returned. It must be borne in mind, however, that a Whig government was in power at the time, and had much influence with a subservient parliament. The year 1756 was remarkable for the great dearth and high price of corn, and a bill was passed to prevent its exportation, by which an embargo was laid on all outward-bound vessels laden with corn, bread, or flour. This, however, was found insufficient to remedy the evil, and in the spring of the following year, it was enacted that for a specified time, foreign corn should be admitted free of duty, and all distillation from grain was prohibited. In 1757, the celebrated coalition ministry was formed, of which both Pitt and Fox were members, and in which lord North, the member for Banbury, was raised to office as one of the lords of the treasury in 1759. On the 25th of October, 1760, without any premonitory symptom,

the king dropped down in his palace at Kensington, and almost immediately expired in consequence of a ruptured ventricle of the heart.

George III., grandson of the late monarch, now quietly succeeded to the regal power, and in the first session of his first parliament, which met on the 18th of November, in order to prosecute with vigour the war with France, the supplies amounted to nearly twenty millions. Shortly after his accession, the king raised the princess Charlotte of Mecklenberg Strelitz to share his throne, and their majesties were crowned on the 22nd of September. The Bute administration rose and fell. Grenville gave place to Rockingham; but still lord North continued in office. The imposition of taxes on the North American colonies caused a spirit of resistance among the inhabitants, which ended in the formation of the United States. Pitt was raised to the earldom of Chatham, and the duke of Grafton became first lord of the treasury. In 1767, there was a change in the government, and lord North became chancellor of the exchequer. In 1770, the earl of Chatham declared for reform, the Grafton administration fell, and the member for Banbury became prime minister of England.

He is represented as having been a most amiable man in private life, and possessed of many elegant acquirements. With much official experience, he was thoroughly acquainted with the routine of public business, and had become an expert and eloquent master of debate. His amiability of temper was but rarely ruffled, and his good qualities had secured him a greater amount of personal esteem than any preceding premier

of Great Britain. But neither his ability nor his good qualities could disarm opposition, or constitute office a "bed of roses." The earl of Chatham headed the opposition in the house of peers, and proved a debater with whom no rival in the administration could cope. His daring speech will be long remembered, when he was interrupted by cries of "To the bar! to the bar!" and thundered forth in reply, "My words remain unretracted, unexplained, re-affirmed! I will trust no sovereign in the world with the means of purchasing the liberties of the people." The popular cry was then "Wilkes and Liberty!" and as may be easily surmised, the member for Banbury was nowise in love with it. Then there were also the letters of "Junius"-terrible thorns in the side of the minister-"Junius," of whom Burke thus spoke in the house :-- "How comes this Junius to have broken through the cobwebs of the law, and to have ranged uncontrolled, unpunished through the land? The myrmidons of the court have been long, and are still pursuing him in vain. They will not spend their time upon me, or upon you, when the mighty boar of the forest, that has broken through all their toils is before them. But what will all their efforts avail? No sooner has he wounded one, than he strikes down another dead at his feet. For my own part, when I saw his attack upon the king, I own my blood ran cold. Not that he has not asserted many bold truths: yes, sir, there are in that composition many bold truths by which a wise prince might profit. But while I expected his final fall, behold him rising still higher, and coming down souse upon both houses of parliament:-not content with carrying away our royal eagle, he has laid you

prostrate, and king, lords, and commons thus become but the sport of his fury." The withering sarcasms of "Junius" must have been keenly felt, to have elicited from Burke such statements as these; but so well did the writer maintain his incognito, that all the subtleties of the law, and all the machinery at the disposal of the state were levelled against him and his publisher in vain.

It may interest some to know that in 1772, the total supplies voted for the year amounted but to £7,860,250, and that the national debt was then somewhat under one hundred and thirty millions. In 1774, the struggle commenced between Great Britain and her colonies in North America; and in 1775, general Washington, whose great-grandfather had been a farmer in Sulgrave, was appointed to the command of the armed sons of Columbia. Dr. Benjamin Franklin, another distinguished name in connection with America, was also sprung from a Banbury stock, the ashes of his grandfather having now reposed for nearly a couple of centuries in the parish churchyard, and his father having served his apprenticeship to a dyer in the town. In 1776, the American congress issued the declaration of independence; and in 1778, France entered into a treaty with the revolted states. Disaster succeeded disaster on the western continent-France and Spain were in arms against Great Britain—a vote of want of confidence in ministers was lost only by nine votes, and on the 20th of March, 1782, lord North tendered the resignation of his cabinet, and was appointed by his majesty to the lord wardenship of the Cinque ports. The marquis of Rockingham succeeded to power; but death shortly afterwards

claimed him for his own, and the responsibilities of office were accepted by lord Shelbourne, who on the 20th of January, 1783, acknowledged the independence of the thirteen states of America. In the discussion of the terms of peace, the new ministry was left in a minority, and under the premiership of the duke of Portland, lord North took the seals of the "home department." But in this country, coalition governments are rarely lasting, and the close of the year saw Mr. Pitt at the helm of the state. In 1784, there was a general election, and although lord North's co-operation with Fox had considerably weakened his influence with his party, he was for the twelfth time returned member for Banbury.

A gang of desperadoes had long infested this neighbourhood, having its head quarters at Culworth, and its ramifications extending through several adjacent villages. The police regulations of those days were exceedingly defective, and the thieves seem to have carried on their depredations for many years without hindrance or molestation. They belonged chiefly to the labouring class, and numbered upwards of a dozen members; but there were one or two sons of farmers among the number. The gang, however, was eventually broken up, and four of them were executed at Northampton on the 3rd of August, 1787, after having confessed to their participation in nearly fifty robberies. Their names were John Smith, sen., William Bowers, William Pettipher, and Richard Law, all of Culworth. The parish clerk of Sulgrave, William Abbot by name, was transported for life, and John Smith, jun., his brother William, and William Terrill were

acquitted; but the first-named of the last three was executed at Warwick two years afterwards, for a highway robbery committed near Gaydon. Others of the gang absconded and were never more heard of, whilst two or three settled down quietly to the peaceful pursuits of honest industry.

Fears having been for some time entertained relative to the safety of the parish church, it was surveyed in 1773 by two gentlemen from London, who declared "the tower to be very substantial and fit to stand for ages." They also gave their opinion that "the chancel and that part of the church north and south of the tower was in very good condition, and would stand extremely well with small repair;" but the portiou of the building to the westward of the tower was described as being "in a very dangerous condition, and should be taken down and rebuilt." In 1785, the church was surveyed by Mr. Dalton, who declared it to be "as safe as St. Paul's in London;" but in the following year that gentleman seems to have changed his mind, for in company with Mr. Burton he reported the roof of the south aisle as "ruinous and unsafe," and that it would be necessary to take down the tower to the level of the roof, as it continued to press upon and injure the adjoining piers. They also recommended other alterations which would cost £2,100 in the aggregate; but even then, they said, they could not give an assurance that it would not require a material outlay for annual repair. On the 12th of April, 1790, it was resolved in vestry that the church and tower should be taken down and rebuilt; and on the 24th of May, the seal of the corporation was affixed to the act of parliament just passed, without a single dissenting voice.

In the month of July, the inner fittings of the church were removed, and the work of demolition went on apace till the morning of Sunday the 12th of December, when the principal aisle came down with a terrific crash that was heard at the distance of two miles from the spot. The tower fell on the following day—the pillars which supported it having been previously partially destroyed—and in its fall, it retained its perpendicular position until the base reached the ground, when it shivered, and cracked, and finally fell to pieces, with a noise that reverberated through the streets like thunder. But the work of destruction was not yet complete; for many of the exterior walls were still standing, and even gunpowder had to be resorted to, wherewith to dislodge the substantial masonry. The present church was erected on the site of that which had thus been destroyed, and was opened for public worship on the 5th of September, 1797, when Dr. Crotch presided at the organ, and the hon. and rev. Thomas Twistleton, D.D., preached from the gospel by St. John IV. 20. "Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship." But the portico and tower of the church were not finished until 1822, and the whole debt was not cleared off until 1861, seventy years after the passing of the act. The whole cost of the building-principal and interest-amounted to nearly £40,000. The tower is 133 feet high, and contains a peal of eight bells, whilst the church has accommodation for 2,300 worshippers.

The reader will now return to the dissolution of parliament on the 11th of June, 1790, and he will find that at the





general election which then ensued, lord North was returned as member for Banbury for the thirteenth time; but his father, the earl of Guildford, dying on the 4th of August immediately ensuing, his lordship vacated his seat in the commons, and took his place among the peers of the realm. He was succeeded in the representation of the borough by his eldest son George lord North, who continued a member of the lower house for two years, when on his father's demise, he too was called to the house of lords. He was succeeded in the vacant seat by his younger brother Frederick, who was appointed to a lucrative post under government in 1794, when Mr. William Holbech, of Farnborough, was elected member for the borough.

In the month of February, 1793, war was declared against the French republic, the leaders of which had, a week or two previously, led forth their monarch to a public death. Little was done this year save a large increase to the army and navy; but on the 1st of June, 1794, Lord Howe gained a brilliant victory over the French admiral Joyeuse, in which he captured seven ships of the line. The allies were not so successful by land, where their energies were crippled by want of concert among their commanders, and both Belgium and Holland fell under the sway of republican France. The year 1795 passed over without the achievement of any important results, except the withdrawal of the shattered British army from Holland, and an ineffectual effort to aid the insurgent royalists of La Vendee. In 1796, the archduke Charles saved Germany, but Bonaparte over-ran the greater portion of Italy. In the month of October, a new parliament was

summoned, and Dudley North, Esq., another member of the Wroxton family, was returned as Banbury's representative.

The year 1797 is chiefly memorable for the victory gained by Sir John Jervis over the Spanish fleet off Cape St. Vincent, and for that off Camperdown, won by admiral Duncan over the Dutch. But whilst England thus proved herself triumphant by sea, the French were equally victorious on land, and the warlike army of Italy showed itself by its bravery in the field, the celerity of its movements, and its noble powers of patient endurance, to be in all respects worthy of Napoleon its chief. The year 1798 was principally remarkable for the Irish rebellion on the one hand, and the battle of the Nile on the other, in the latter of which Nelson captured ten French ships of the line.

The commencement of the present century found Europe convulsed from end to end; for Bonaparte had now returned from his campaigns in Egypt, and had raised himself to the dignity of first consul of France. In consequence of the great scarcity of corn in England, and the consequent high price of bread, serious riots occurred throughout the country, and from these Banbury was not found to be exempt. An act was passed prohibiting the sale of bread until it had been baked for twenty-four hours; and this act was rapidly followed by others suspending distillation of spirits from grain, and granting bounties on the importation of foreign corn. In the course of the present year, the incorporating act of union with Ireland was completed, and the "sister country" was no longer blessed with a litigious parliament in College Green.

A coalition of the northern powers of Europe with France again called the fleets of England to the sea, and on the 2nd of April, 1801, Nelson vanquished the Danish fleet at Copenhagen, protected and covered as it was by batteries both afloat and on shore, and by this victory he dissolved the bonds of the northern confederacy. In 1802, the parliament was again dissolved, and Dudley North, Esq., was returned as member for Banbury. George, third earl of Guilford, died in the course of this year without male issue, but leaving behind him three daughters, of whom the present baroness North was the second, and is now the sole survivor.

War again broke out between this country and France in 1803, after a short and hollow peace; and in consequence of the threats of Napoleon to invade England, her peaceful citizens flew to arms, and in one form or another, with regular soldiers, volunteers, militia, or yeomen, her coasts bristled with bayonets, and half-a-million of her sons stood ready for the fray. Nor was Banbury behind the rest of the country; for then, as now, she readily contributed her armed quota, and a fair proportion of her townsmen were ready to repel the expected foe, and to peril their all for their fatherland. On the 18th of May, 1804, Napoleon was raised to the imperial throne; and on the 2nd of the following December, he was crowned emperor, the new dynasty being consecrated by the presence of the pope. On the 26th of May, 1805, he was crowned king of Italy and Milan, and Genoa was added to the empire of France. On the 21st of October, the battle of Trafalgar gave England the greatest naval victory she had ever gained, but it cost her the life of her greatest admiral,

for Nelson fell in the arms of victory. In the summer of that year, the prince of Wales, afterwards George IV., paid a visit to lord Guilford at Wroxton—an event that is recorded by a second inscription on the obelisk in the park—and again in 1806, and also in 1808. On his second visit, he was accompanied by his brother the duke of Clarence, afterwards William IV., and the freedom of the borough of Banbury was offered to both princes and graciously accepted, so that in the record-rolls of the burgesses are to be found the names of two of England's kings.

William Pitt, a statesman who had swayed the destinies of the country for twenty years without either enriching himself or aggrandising his family, died on the 23rd of January, 1806, and was succeeded in office by the administration of lord Grenville. The new government attempted to negociate a peace, but the attempt was found to be a failure, and the death of Fox on the 13th of September caused some trifling changes in the ministry. A dissolution of parliament followed, and Mr. Praed successfully contested the borough with Mr. Dudley North the former member, when Mr. Praed polled ten, and his opponent only six votes. The coalition cabinet was dismissed by the king early in 1807, and the duke of Portland was called on to form an administration. The new premier advised a dissolution, an event which took place on the 29th of April, and the rival candidates for the corporation's favour were again found face to face in the field. On this occasion the votes were equal, and a double return was made by the mayor, which was directed by the house of commons to be amended, and a new writ ordered to issue. Now indeed came the tug of war; but in the result, the influence of the house of Wroxton was found in the ascendant, for Mr. North polled five votes to three.

The commencement of 1808 found England at war with nearly every country in Europe; for even Portugal was overrun by the troops of France, and Joseph Bonaparte, after having handed over the crown of Naples to Murat, was raised to the throne of Spain. But the junta of Seville proclaimed war against the invader, and England supplied them with both arms and money. Portugal rose in open revolt, and Sir Arthur Wellesley landed at the mouth of the river Mondego, routed the French at Vimiera, and Junot and all his army capitulated. Sir John Moore was sent to aid the Spaniards; but Napoleon and his army were already there, and after having conducted a masterly retreat in the immediate presence of a foe flushed with a long career of success, the English general fell at Corunna in the month of January, 1809.

But now a commander re-appears upon the scene, qualified to cope with the first marshals of France, and to check her eagles in their flight of conquest. Sir Arthur Wellesley returns to his old battle ground, and succeeds in driving Soult out of Portugal, capturing all his cannon, baggage, ammunition, and even his military chest and cash. The French had upwards of 200,000 soldiers in Spain, yet the British general boldly led his 23,000 men across the frontier, and effected a junction with the Spanish general Cuesta. The battle of Talavera was fought on the 27th and 28th of July, in which the French marshal Victor was utterly defeated with a loss of 7,000 of the flower of his troops. But threatened

on both flanks with armies, each of which was thrice as numerous as his own, and being only indifferently supported by the Spaniards, Sir Arthur retreats once more into Portugal and is raised to the peerage as Viscount Wellington of Talavera. In other parts of the continent the star of Napoleon was high in the ascendant. He fought and won the terrible battle of Wagram, after which the humbled house of Hapsburg was compelled to sue for an inglorious peace. The badly-planned expedition to Walcheren cost England a large amount of treasure and ten thousand men, bringing disgrace upon her arms and deserved censure on the memory of Castlereagh.

In 1810, Cadiz was the principal fortress in Spain which still held out against the power of the French, who were now commanded in the peninsula by marshal Massena. That commander moved his troops onwards to Portugal, for the purpose of "driving the British leopards into the sea," and on the 27th of September, he attacked lord Wellington on the heights of Busaco, but was repulsed with great loss. After having achieved this, the British retired within the stronglyfortified lines of Torres Vedras, thus covering and defending the city of Lisbon. While these operations were going on, Napoleon espoused a daughter of the Emperor of Austria, after having divorced the faithful Josephine, and his next step was to incorporate Holland with the overgrown empire of which he wielded the sceptre. It was also in the course of the present year that the mental aberrations of George III. became too conspicuous for him to be longer entrusted with the royal functions, and the sovereign powers were confided to the heir apparent, with the title of "prince regent."

On the 5th of March, 1811, general Graham fought and won the battle of Barossa, the French losing 3000 in killed and wounded. Marshal Beresford defeated Soult at Badajos, in May, after which Lord Wellington made two unsuccessful attempts to take the town in question. Towards the close of the year, the czar of Russia joined the other cabinets of Europe, who now appeared in earnest to break their fetters, and France called forth fresh conscripts to the field. On good Friday in this year, a calamitous fire broke out in Warkworth, and although every effort was made to suppress it, nearly the whole village was destroyed.

In January, 1812, lord Wellington carried Ciudad Rodrigo by storm, after an active siege of twelve days, and for this gallant action he was raised to an earldom. On the 7th of April, Badajos fell before the determined onset of the British army, and on the 27th of June, Lord Wellington captured Salamanca. On the 22nd of July, he defeated Marmont on the banks of the Garena, taking 7,000 prisoners, eleven pieces of cannon, and two eagles. The conqueror entered Madrid on the 12th of August, and king Joseph fled to the left bank of the Tagus. But the concentration of superior numbers again required that the English commander should retreat, which he carried out in a masterly style, placing his army once more along the frontiers of Portugal. On the 14th of September, Napoleon entered Moscow in triumph; but here the flames destroyed the towering hopes of the conqueror, and in October he reluctantly gave orders to return to France. In the course of this disastrous movement, danger lurked at every step, and 300,000 men were found frozen under the

snow when the sun of the following spring had dissipated the mantle with which the previous winter had enshrouded the dead. On the 24th of November, a new parliament met in London, to which the hon. Frederick Sylvester North Douglas, son of lord Glenbervie the borough recorder, was returned as the representative for Banbury.

In the middle of May, 1813, lord Wellington's army again entered Spain in three columns, and on the 21st of June, he defeated the French army at Vittoria, capturing 150 pieces of cannon, four hundred and fifteen waggons of ammunition, all the baggage of the enemy and their military stores, together with the baton of field-marshal Jourdan. Between the 25th of July and the 2nd of August there were ten battles fought in the passes of the Pyrenees, from which at length marshal Soult recoiled, having been driven back by the British at every point of attack. San Sebastian was stormed on the 8th of September, and Pampeluna yielded on the 31st of October, by which time lord Wellington and his vanguard had descended into the fertile plains of France. The terrible battle of Leipsic fought from the 14th to the 19th of October was decided against Napoleon, who lost therein 80,000 men, and he then retired to the banks of the Rhine.

The bloody drama on the continent is now drawing to a close. Nearer and nearer the Russians, Prussians, and Austrians advance upon Paris, and on the 27th of March, 1814, the Parisians hear the sounds of war drawing nigh to their gates. On the 30th, the capital surrendered to the victorious allies, and on the 10th of April, marshal Soult was defeated by lord Wellington at Toulouse. On the 11th, Napoleon

signed the treaty of abdication, and on the 20th, he withdrew to Elba with four hundred of his guards. But on the 1st of March, in the year 1815, he again landed in France, and having been joined by those who were sent to oppose his progress, marched in triumph on the capital. Again Europe appealed to arms, and on the 18th of June, on the crimsoned field of Waterloo, the star of Napoleon's glory was extinguished for ever.

At the general election in 1818, the hon. F. Douglas was again returned for the borough, but his death occurring in the following year, he was succeeded by the hon. H. Legge, another relative of the Wroxton family. There is a monument erected in the National School to the memory of Mr. Douglas, setting forth his philanthropic exertions in the cause of education. On the 29th of January, 1820, king George III., whose mental alienation had undergone no change, was summoned to that tribunal from the decision of which there is no appeal, leaving behind him the character, that if he was a weak prince, he was at the same time a well-meaning man.



CHAPTER XVIII.

George KU., William KU., and Victoria.

Accession of the Prince Regent.—Political Changes.—William the IV.— The Reform Bill.—Corporation Reform.—Judicial Difficulties.—Victoria.—Contested Elections.—The present High Steward.—Murder of Kalabergo.—South Banbury.—As We Are.

SORGE IV., who for the preceding ten years had wielded the royal authority as regent, now ascended the vacant throne. The parliament was dissolved as a matter of course, and Mr. Legge was again returned member for Banbury. But there was now a loud cry for reform; and in consequence of their well-known dislike to political change, the corporation got rather roughly handled by the populace, who immured their civic rulers in their own Town Hall. Nor was the king himself over popular with his subjects; for by the spirit of persecution with which he hunted down his injured queen, he alienated from himself the affections of his people, and the beginning of his reign was not by any means a triumphal entry on a monarch's career. When that most unpopular measure "the divorce bill" was withdrawn by the government at its last stage, the inhabitants of Banbury were by no means chary in manifesting their joy at the queen's escape.

In 1826, Mr. Legge accepted a situation at the Board of Customs, and his younger brother Arthur was chosen member in his stead. Parliament was dissolved, and the same gentleman was again returned. Lord Liverpool's administration

was succeeded by that of Mr. Canning, whose death occurred in 1827, and lord Goderich was called upon to assume the reins of government. The battle of Navarino was fought and won, shortly after which "untoward event" the vacillating cabinet fell to pieces. The duke of Wellington was sent for and commissioned by his majesty to form a government, so that when parliament met for business on the 29th of January, 1828, the retired warrior took his seat as first lord of the treasury. In this session, mainly through the persevering advocacy of Lord John Russell, the odious "test and corporation act" of the second Charles was swept away; and through the instrumentality of the Irish association, Daniel O'Connell was returned member for Clare. This was followed by Catholic emancipation in 1829, and in June, 1830, George IV. slept with his fathers.

On the 23rd of July, shortly after his accession to the throne, William IV. prorogued the parliament in person, and dissolved it by proclamation on the following day. Henry Villiers Stuart, cousin to the then representative of the Wroxton family, was returned by the corporation as member for Banbury. The legislature assembled on the 26th of October; and on the 15th of November, on the motion of Sir Henry Parnell for an inquiry into the accounts of the civil list, the government was defeated by a majority of twenty-nine. On the following day, ministers resigned, and were succeeded in office by the cabinet of earl Grey. It may interest some persons to call to mind the principal personages comprised in the new government, which was enabled to carry out the greatest peaceful revolution of modern times. Lord Brougham, lord

chancellor; lord Althorpe, chancellor of the exchequer; lords Melbourne, Palmerston, and Goderich, home, foreign, and colonial secretaries; lord John Russell, paymaster of forces; the marquis of Anglesea, lord-lieutenant of Ireland, with Mr. Stanley (now the earl of Derby) for his chief secretary; Sir James Graham, first lord of the admiralty; lord Lansdowne, president of the council; lord Durham, privy seal; and lord Holland, chancellor of the duchy of Lancaster.

Such was the composition of that government which on the 1st of March, 1831, brought forward the reform bill for England and Wales, which consisted of three distinct parts, viz., the disfranchisement of certain places which had previously sent members to parliament, and among these the borough of Brackley was included; the enfranchisement of other places which had risen to opulence and importance throughout the kingdom; and the extension of the franchise so as to increase the number of electors in those places that were allowed to retain the privilege. The debate lasted seven nights, and on the 14th, the bill was read a first time without dividing the house. "The bill, the whole bill, and nothing but the bill," was now the watchward of reformers of every grade, and both houses of parliament were inundated with petitions in its favour. On the 21st of March, lord John Russell moved the second reading of the measure, whilst Sir R. Vivyan proposed. that it be read a second time that day six months. The discussion lasted for two nights, and the numbers were 301 and 302, giving ministers a majority of one vote. On the 18th of April, the house went into committee; when in a full assembly, ministers were left in a minority of eight, and it was

then resolved by the cabinet that after the dispatch of the necessary business, an appeal should be made to the country. This was resisted by the opponents of the measure, and on the 22nd, as lord Wharncliffe in the house of lords and Sir R. Peel in the commons were in the act of denouncing the conduct of the ministers, the deep boom of the cannon announced the king's approach, for the purpose of proroguing the parliament prior to its dissolution.

Great was the joy of the people throughout the kingdom on witnessing the firm determination of their rulers to keep faith with those under their sway, and the most strenuous efforts were everywhere made to return to parliament such candidates as were friendly to the ministerial measure. Mr. Stuart the late member for Banbury, being regarded as a supporter of the reform bill, was no longer considered a fitting representative for its opponents; and as the majority of the corporation were decidedly hostile to the proposed change, a new candidate was provided for them in the person of colonel Henry H. Hutchinson of Weston-by-Weedon, who had married the widow of the hon. Frederick Douglas. The 2nd of May, the day fixed for the election, was rapidly approaching, and the most cogent and convincing reasons of a purely personal character were held out to such of the eighteen electors as were known to be opposed to the bill, in order to induce them to abstain from tendering their votes. In point of fact, intimidation of the most threatening kind was freely resorted to by the supporters of the bill, in order to deter their opponents from coming to the poll. It was necessary, however, that a candidate should be found for them also; and contrary to the wishes of his friends, who tried to persuade him that he had no chance of success, Mr. John Easthope, a London stockbroker, was induced to allow himself to be put in nomination.

The eventful day arrived and the whole town was in commotion. A notice had been issued requesting heads of families to keep women and children within doors-an ominous warning of intended mischief. Soon after three in the morning, the sound of the horn summoned the reformers to their allotted posts. The North Bar was barricaded with waggons, and the defenders of this important position were armed with formidable bludgeons, and with the still more formidable stakes to which the sheep-pens were secured on market days. Lieut-colonel Miller, an old warrior of the Peninsula, and the Rev. E. G. Walford, were the only non-resident members of the corporation, hostile to the measure, who succeeded in evading the blockade—the former by a flank movement through the Plough yard, and the latter by arriving in the town on the evening before the contest. Mr. Easthope also arrived on the night of the 1st, and on the morning of the 2nd, he addressed an enthusiastic assemblage of his supporters. Between eight and nine, colonel Hutchinson was observed to leave the mansion of Mr. Brickwell in Cornhill, and a mob of persons rapidly collected. The Rev. E. G. Walford, who was in company with the colonel, had his hat knocked over his eyes, and the gallant candidate himself was about to be still more roughly handled, when he drew a dagger with which he kept his assailants at bay, through the market place and along Bridge street, although the crowd was increasing at every step. He gained the bridge, when the cry was raised, "Over with him into the canal!" but the gleaming dagger deterred the boldest from grappling with the veteran, and his hat only visited the limpid element beneath. On arriving at the toll-gate which then stood at the far end of the bridge, one who was in those days, as he is still, a trusted leader of the people, mounted the barrier and addressed the assemblage in words of warning. He told them that they had done enough in driving the foe from their gates, and enjoined them not to sully their victory by further violence. His eloquence prevailed, and the crowd returned to the town. The polling took place at the old town hall, and only two of the supporters of colonel Hutchinson ventured to record their votes on his behalf, whilst six were registered for Easthope and reform.

Parliament met on the 14th of June, and the reform bill was introduced on the 24th; on the 4th of July, the debate on the second reading commenced, and occupied the house of commons for three nights, when the division showed 367 against 231, thus giving ministers a majority of 136. From the 13th of July to the 7th of September, the opposition waged a hopeless war with the government, battling in committee against every clause; and on the 15th, the third reading was carried by a majority of fifty-five. On the 3rd of October, earl Grey moved the second reading of the bill in the house of peers, and after a lengthened discussion, the measure was rejected on the 8th, by 191 against 158 votes. On Monday the 10th, lord Ebrington brought forward a motion pledging the house of commons to support the ministry, which was carried by 329 against 198.

On the 12th of December, the measure was again introduced by lord John Russell, and passed the commons on the 23rd of March, 1832. It was read a first time in the upper house on the 26th, and the second reading was moved on the 9th of April, the division occurring on the 13th, when 184 peers voted in favour of the second reading, and only 175 against it, thus giving ministers a majority of nine. But in the committee, the anti-reformers obtained a victory and the ministry resigned on the 9th of May.

Then arose such a turmoil throughout the country as has rarely been witnessed in a time of peace, and language of the most threatening kind was used towards those who had rejected the measure. Petitions poured in to both houses, many of them more strongly than respectfully worded, and one of these was sent from Banbury, praying the house of commons to refuse the supplies until the reform bill should become law. On the 10th, lord Ebrington again came to the rescue, and moved "That an humble address be presented to his majesty, humbly to represent the deep regret felt by the house of commons at the change that had been announced in his majesty's councils by the retirement of those ministers in whom the commons of England continued to repose unabated confidence." On a division the resolution was carried by a majority of eighty. Lord Lyndhurst was sent for by his majesty; but after consulting with the duke of Wellington and Sir Robert Peel, it was found impossible to construct a cabinet in the existing state of affairs, and on the 15th, earl Grey was again sent for by his majesty, and authorised to take the necessary steps to carry the reform bill into

law. Understanding the hint thus conveyed, the great majority of opposition peers abstained from attendance in the upper house, and on the 7th of June, the bill received the royal assent by commission. Thus the farce of eighteen men returning the candidate who should be supposed to represent the borough was brought to an end, and the franchise was extended to all the £10 householders in the parish. A triumphal procession took place on the 13th of July, and a general illumination concluded the business of the day.

On the 3rd of December, Parliament was dissolved by proclamation and the first election took place under the new order of things. Henry J. Pye, Esq., of Chacombe Priory, was announced a candidate in the conservative interest, and Henry William Tancred, Esq., appealed to the constituency on behalf of the liberal cause. Finding his prospects of success to be exceedingly remote, Mr. Pye withdrew from the contest, and his rival was returned without further opposition. The session of 1833 passed over without any event of great importance, but in that of 1834, there was a difference of opinion among the ministry relative to the propriety of instituting an enquiry into the temporalities of the Irish church, and the duke of Richmond, Sir James Graham, and Mr. Stanley—now the earl of Derby—seceded from the cabinet. Mr. Littleton, the Irish secretary, having embroiled the government by too friendly and confidential a communication with O'Connell, Earl Grey resigned and was succeeded by lord Melbourne on the 7th of July. The poor law amendment act was the most important measure passed in the course of the present session, and the Banbury union, with its 51

parishes, was the result of the act. The death of earl Spencer on the 10th of November, by the elevation of lord Althorp to the house of peers, induced the king to relieve lord Melbourne of the responsible duties of prime minister. Sir Robert Peel was sent for from Italy; but it was late in December ere his cabinet was complete. The new premier wisely deemed it impossible that he could carry on the affairs of the nation with the house of commons as then constituted, so he resorted to a dissolution in January, 1835, and appealed to the country for a fair trial. Edward Lloyd Williams, Esq., barrister-at-law, appeared on this occasion as an opponent to Mr. Tancred, but he only polled forty three votes, whilst the former member had upwards of two hundred recorded in his favour. On the question of dealing with the surplus revenues of the Irish church, ministers were left in a minority and resigned on the 8th of April, lord Melbourne being again called on to the helm of the state.

Great dissatisfaction existed with regard to the self-elected municipal corporations throughout the country, whose powers were subjected to no popular control, and who neither represented nor were respected by the people. On the 5th of June, lord John Russell introduced the government measure of municipal reform, by which the powers of local legislation were wrested from the irresponsible hands of those who held them, and the favour of the ratepayers was the only passport to municipal office. The bill was opposed at every stage, and was sadly mutilated in the house of peers; but by the firmness of the commons, many of the obnoxious alterations were expunged, and on the 7th of September, it passed into a

law. One of the last acts of the expiring corporation was to sell the maces and regalia of the borough to the head of the house of Wroxton, under the pretence of liquidating a debt—a course of procedure which few other bodies in the kingdom were found mean enough to equal. In accordance with the provisions of the act, the new corporation was elected in December and January, and Thomas Tims, Esq. was the first mayor under the amended system.

On the 19th of June, 1837, death reigned in the palace of England's kings, and William IV. breathed his last. duty of administering the government of a mighty empire then devolved upon Victoria, a young and inexperienced lady, but one who has now become a sage matron, beloved by her subjects and respected by the world. Parliament was prorogued on the 17th of July and dissolved shortly afterwards, when Henry Tawney, Esq. entered the lists with Mr. Tancred, to compete for the suffrages of the electors of Banbury. conservative opinions were somewhat at a discount; for whilst 181 polled for Mr. Tancred, only 75 could be prevailed on to support his opponent. The coronation of her majesty took place on the 28th of June, 1838, and was signalised in Banbury by one of the most extensive banquets that ever took place within the walls of the borough. Accommodation was provided in the horse fair for 3600 guests, and for their refreshment there were served up 3050lbs. of beef, 1700lbs. of plum pudding, 1600lbs. of bread, and forty-five kilderkins of beer and porter.

In consequence of a disagreement with the local parliament of Jamaica, the government brought in a bill to suspend the

constitution of that colony for five years; but being unable to carry it, they tendered their resignations, and Sir Robert Peel was authorised to name a cabinet on the 7th of May, 1839. That statesman required the removal of certain ladies from the household of her majesty, prior to his acceptance of office, and the queen declining to comply, the cabinet was re-constructed. In May, 1841, the house of commons passed a vote of want of confidence in ministers, and the parliament was shortly afterwards dissolved. At the election which followed, Mr. Tancred was opposed by Hugh Holbech, Esq. of Farnborough in the conservative interest, and by Mr. Henry Vincent on behalf of the more advanced liberals, but at the close of the poll, the numbers were for Tancred, 124; Holbech, 100; Vincent, 51. The new house of commons also expressed its want of confidence in ministers, on which they resigned accordingly and were succeeded by Sir Robert Peel.

The ecclesiastical district of South Banbury was formed in 1846, under the vi. and vii. Victoria, and at first comprehended all that part of the parish situated on the southern side of an imaginary line commencing at its western boundary and drawn along the middle of the Broughton road to West Bar street in the borough; then along the middle of the street just named, across the horse fair, down High street, and along Bridge street, to where the Cherwell divides the two counties. The new district was also to include all that part of the parish situate on the eastern side of the river, and consequently in the adjoining county of Northampton. The foundation stone of Christ church was laid on the 28th of November, 1851, by the baroness North, and underneath this

was deposited a leaden box containing specimens of the current coin, and on a plate was engraved, "To the honour and glory of Christ our Lord, this foundation of a church for the district of South Banbury was laid by the baroness North of Wroxton Abbey, in the presence of Samuel lord bishop of Oxford, November 18th, 1851. Rev. Charles Forbes, M.A., incumbent, Benjamin Ferry, Esq., architect, Mr. Joseph Hope, builder." The Church Building Society contributed the sum of £400 towards the expence of the erection, on condition that seven hundred of its sittings should be free.

By an order in council, dated the 2nd of February, 1852, the boundary line of this ecclesiastical district was altered, and a scheme was ratified which had been presented by the ecclesiastical commissioners. It directed that the boundary line should commence along the Oxford road where the parish of Banbury joins the chapelry of Bodicote, along the centre of this road and South Bar street to the lane leading to Calthorpe cottages, along the centre of the said lane to the wall bounding Calthorpe grounds; along the side of Calthorpe cottages, and round the boundary wall of certain other houses or tenements, the property of Barnes Austen and others; thence along the boundary wall of Calthorpe grounds to the ditch dividing the properties of the Rev. W. C. Risley and Miss Golby, round the garden wall of Mr. George Cottam, along the centre of his passage to the middle of High street; along High street to the top of Butcher Row, along the centre thereof as far as the Market place, and diagonally across it to the end of Castle street, along the middle thereof to Factory street, along this to the boundary wall of the garden of the late Thomas Tims, Esq.; along this wall through a certain building to the canal wharf, across the Oxford and Coventry canal and towing path, along a ditch dividing the property of Thomas Scrivener to the mill-head stream, thence in a northwardly direction by the said stream to the centre of the river Cherwell. All that part of the parish on the eastern side of the Cherwell to be in the district of South Banbury, as well as the portion to the south-eastern side of the boundary line on the west side of the river; whilst all that portion on the north-western side of the boundary line shall belong to and form part of the parish of Banbury.

Mr. John Brownsill of this parish, who died on the 14th of October, 1848, by codicil to his will bearing date the 18th of June in the same year, bequeathed to the Minister of Banbury and the Churchwardens of Banbury and Neithrop, in trust, the sum of £400, less the legacy duty, to be by them placed in the stocks or funds, and that they should yearly at Christmas for ever apply the interest thereof for the benefit of the most deserving poor of Banbury and Neithrop, as they shall think best. In 1849, lord Saye and Sele, D.C.L., was elected high steward of the borough, and is the present possessor of the castle and domains of Broughton. He is the eldest son of the late hon, and rev, Thomas J. Twistleton, of Gayton in Northamptonshire, and succeeded to the title and estates on his cousin's death in 1847. He is the tenth in descent from the noted Geoffrey lord Saye, who was one of the twenty-five barons appointed to enforce the observance of Magna Charta. Like his illustrious progenitors, his lordship is a liberal in politics; although it is only on occasions of importance that he is found to be embarked upon that stormy sea, but his vote is then ever on the right side.

The foundation stone of the Unitarian chapel was laid on the 11th of September, 1849, and finished in the course of the following year. It is built in the early English style, sixty-seven feet in length, the width of the nave is twenty-three feet, and thirty-five high, whilst the width of the aisle is thirteen feet. The building is a very neat specimen of a place of worship, and reflects equal credit on Mr. J. H. Underwood of Oxford, who was the architect, and Mr. John Chesterman of Abingdon, the builder. The congregation was first formed by the Rev. Samuel Wells, who had to resign the vicarage in the time of Charles II. under the circumstances recorded in that king's reign.

The commencement of the year 1852 was marked by a fearful tragedy, which spread consternation through the whole town. John Kalabergo, a native of Lombardy, had left his home in early youth to escape the conscription of the first Napoleon, and had been settled in Banbury for forty years. His nephew William came to reside with him in the latter end of October, 1851, in order to assist him in his business, and on the 9th of the following January, they left home together, in order to undertake one of their journeys in company. They lodged on that night at a public house in Prior's Marston, and were about to return to Banbury on the following evening; when in coming down Williamscot hill, the nephew stepped behind his uncle and fired a pistol, the bullet passing clear through the brain, and the assassin immediately afterwards fired a second barrel, as he subsequently confessed,

"with the intention of making sure." He arrived at his uncle's house in High Street about half-past six, and said "Uncle dead! uncle dead!—dead, dead;—go for the priest!" He was taken into custody the same night, when he attempted to lay the blame upon three men, who he said attacked his uncle as they were coming down the hill, and one of whom pursued himself when he ran away. On Wednesday and Thursday the 3rd and 4th of March, William Kalabergo was tried before Mr. Justice Wightman at the Oxfordshire assizes, when the chain of circumstantial evidence was too conclusive and convincing to admit of the slightest doubt of his guilt, and he was doomed to undergo the last penalty of the law. He made a full confession of his crime to Drs. Tandy and Faa, the priests who attended him whilst under sentence of death, and admitted having robbed his uncle on several prior occasions. From information received from the unhappy culprit, Dr. Tandy caused a grave to be searched, and immediately under the surface, there was found a tin cannister containing two gold watches, three silver ones, a dozen silver tea-spoons and other articles the property of the deceased. No effort was made to obtain a commutation of the sentence, and on the morning of Monday the 22nd of March, William Kalabergo was executed on the tower of Oxford Castle in the presence of many thousands of spectators. By the side of the turnpike road at Williamscot hill, three miles and a half from Banbury, a stone marks the site of the cold-blooded deed.

The Town Hall was erected in 1858, at an expense of £5,737; towards which Mr. Tancred gave a donation of £500; lord Saye and Sele, £100; the sale of the corporation estates





The sun tall of Hah. lind - Non way

and funded property realised £4,887; leaving £250 to be taken from the borough rates. The building is of a semi-Gothic order of architecture, and has more the appearance of a grammar school than a town hall, as the visitor enters from the railway stations. On the ground floor are six cells, the council chamber, the police office, the orderly-room of the rifle volunteers, and a place for storing their arms; whilst the large hall up-stairs is devoted to the purpose of holding the quarter sessions of the borough, the county courts of the district, concerts, lectures, tea parties, and balls.

Resuming our brief summary of political events, Sir Robert Peel, aided by the great body of liberals in the house, succeeded in repealing the import duty on corn, in 1846, so that the bread of the people reached them untaxed, but was defeated on the 25th of June in the same year, and was succeeded by lord John Russell as first lord of the Treasury. parliament was summoned in 1847, when Mr. Tancred was again elected for Banbury. The French revolution of 1848 elevated Louis Napoleon to the President's chair, by a majority of nearly four millions of votes over general Cavaignac, and formed his first step in advance to the imperial throne. the 29th of June, 1850, Sir Robert Peel met with a fall from his horse, and died on the following Tuesday night, amid expressions of very general regret; and in 1852, the duke of Wellington was also numbered with the dead. On the 16th of February, in the last-named year, lord John Russell brought forward his plan for the establishment of a local militia, to which his former colleague lord Palmerston proposed an amendment, and the latter being carried, lord John Russell resigned

the seals, and was succeeded by the earl of Derby. Parliament was dissolved in the following July, and Mr. Tancred was again returned member for Banbury. The government of lord Derby was of short duration; for in the house of commons, ministers were defeated on the budget, when they at once resigned, and the earl of Aberdeen was appointed premier. The years 1853, 1854, and 1855, were signalised by the war with Russia, and the withdrawal of lord John Russell from the cabinet of lord Aberdeen was the signal for an onslaught by Mr. Roebuck, when the government being left in a small minority, their resignations were tendered as a matter of course. Lord Palmerston was called on to take the helm in hand, and on the 8th of February, 1855, he declared his cabinet complete. A conference was held at Vienna relative to the engagements of the war, at which lord John Russel was the principal representative of England; but the diplomatists arrived at no satisfactory results. However, the capture of Sebastopol virtually terminated the Russian war, and terms of peace were concluded at Paris.

Ministers, having been defeated on the subject of the Chinese war, dissolved parliament on the 21st of March, 1857; and at the election which followed, Mr. Tancred was opposed by Mr. Edward Yates, but defeated his new opponent by 216 to 58 votes. The foundation stone of the Cornhill Exchange was laid by Mr. James Cadbury on the 9th of April, and the building itself is highly ornamental, the height of the interior being fourteen yards, whilst the ground area contains about 5000 square feet. At the commencement of the session, 1848, lord Palmerston was censured for his subserviency to the ruler

of France, on which he resigned and was succeeded by lord Derby's government; but the pro-Austrian policy of the conservative chief proved his overthrow, and he was again succeeded by the government of lord Palmerston. On the 29th of October, it became known in Banbury that the venerable Mr. Tancred had been struck down by an almost hopeless paralysis, and on the 1st of November, Mr. Gillery Pigott issued an address declaring himself a candidate for the seat shortly to become vacant. On the following day, Mr. John Hardy followed suit, and Mr. Samuelson's address appeared upon the 3rd. On Tuesday the 7th of December, a deputation waited on Mr. Edward Miall, and presented him with a requisition desiring him to allow himself to be put in nomination, a request with which he eventually complied. The election took place on the 8th of February, 1859, when Mr. Sergeant Pigott resigned, and at the close of the poll, the numbers were as follows: Samuelson, 177; Hardy, 176; Miall, 118. In the month of April, parliament was dissolved by lord Derby's advice, and Mr. Samuelson, and Sir Charles Douglas were the only candidates who went to the poll—the gentleman who had been induced to come forward on conservative principles having resigned a fortnight previously. The election was fixed for the 29th, and the conservatives having thrown the weight of their influence into the scale for Sir Charles Douglas, he was returned by 235 votes to 199. The foundation stone of Banbury Cross, a monument raised in commemoration of the marriage of the princess royal with the heir apparent of the throne of Prussia, was laid in May, and the structure was inaugurated by a Forester's procession on the 3rd of July, 1860, as delineated in the frontispiece of the volume now drawing to a close.

The present trade of the town is varied and improving. Its cakes have rendered Banbury famous throughout the world, and in the getting up of these, the confectioners of the town still shine pre-eminent. The manufacture of the fabric known as "plush" is extensively carried on and gives employment to about 120 families. Web, girth, and horse clothing, are also made to a considerable extent, but not so largely as formerly. The building trade is extensively followed, and gives employment to many workmen. Rope, twine, and sack manufactures have been long established and are now in a thriving condition. There is an extensive manufactory of blacking at North Bar, specimens of which were shown in the exhibitions of 1851 and 1862. But it is in machinery that Banbury excels, and her Vulcan ironfoundry, her Cherwell engine factory, and last but not least, her Britannia works for the manufacture of agricultural implements, have carried her name to the remotest lands. May she long continue to flourish and improve, until she realises the motto inscribed upon her arms,

" Dominus Robis Sol et Scutum."

G. WALFORD, PRINTER, BANBURY.

